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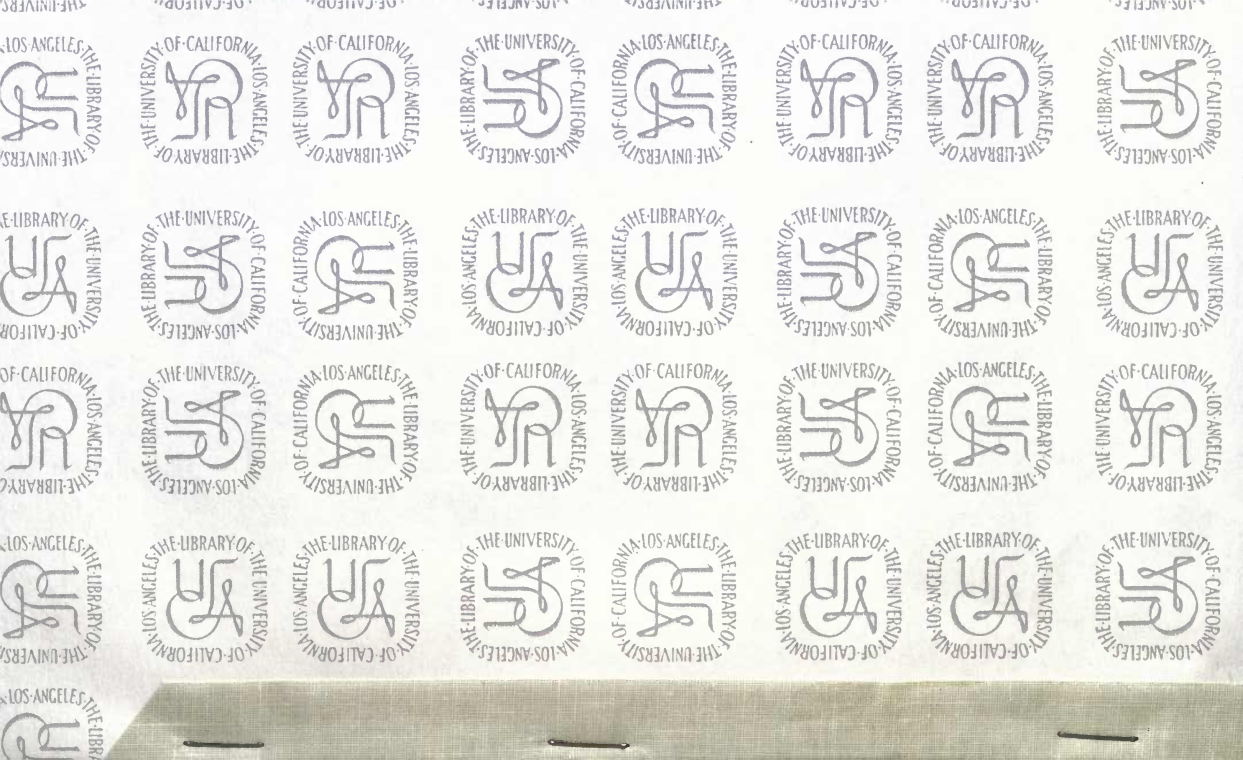
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MAN RESPONSIBLE,

FOR

HIS DISPOSITIONS, OPINIONS, AND CONDUCT.

A LECTURE

DELIVERED IN THE

MECHANICS' INSTITUTION, SOUTHAMPTON BUILDINGS,

ON THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 17, 1840,

BY

ISAAC TAYLOR, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "NATURAL HISTORY OF ENTHUSIASM," ETC.

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MAN RESPONSIBLE,

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THE usual preliminary of a discussion, namely, the definition of the principal term in question, is, in the present instance, attended with an incidental difficulty, not to be surmounted without virtually affirming what has been alleged to require proof. But then this same difficulty attaches to every argument concerning the great principles of human nature; inasmuch as the mere fact that human language furnishes terms whereby such faculties may be defined and described is a substantial proof of their reality.

If, for example, it were asked—Is man a rational animal?—the contrary being pretended, and if the advocate of so whimsical a paradox were required to make us understand, by definitions, or circumlocutions, or by equivalents, drawn from other languages, what it is precisely of which he means to despoil humanity, in merely stating his objection, he must answer it; or at least supply all the materials necessary for his own refutation. The fact that every language of civilised men comprises a large class of words and phrases dependent one upon another for their meaning, and related, closely or remotely, to a certain property, or func-

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tion of human nature, and which terms we can by no means dispense with in describing man, as he is distinguished from the terrestrial orders around him, this fact, attaching universally to the vehicle of thought, affords all the proof which a strict logic would grant in reply to the sophism. Language, when combined in continuous discourse, may indeed, and too often does, convey notions, totally false and absurd; but language itself, which is at once the engine of cogitation, and the record of all facts permanently or incidentally attaching to human nature; language, the least fallacious of historians, which, while it notes the revolutions of empires, is the enduring type of the visible world, and the shadow of the invisible—the mirror of the universe, as known to man, language never lies; how should it do so; seeing that it is itself the creature and reflection of nature? As well deny that the trees, buildings, rocks, and clouds, painted on the bosom of a tranquil lake are images of realities, as well do this, as assume that language, in the abstract, has ever belied humanity, or presented any elements foreign to our constitution.

Philosophers, or teachers may have affirmed, and the multitude may have believed, far more than could be proved: meantime the vehicle they have employed in defining and promulgating such illusions, has faithfully embodied the permanent verities of philosophy and religion; just as a wonder-loving traveller, while he tells a thousand tales of griffins and dragons, sets us right by the dumb testimony of the specimens he has brought with him. Men might as easily create to themselves a sixth sense, as fabricate and retain in use a system of terms, having no archetypes in nature.

And what is true of language generally, respecting human nature at large, is true in particular of the language of each race, respecting its particular characteristics, aud even its

history. For example, were we, as some have done, to reject, as a tissue of arrogant fables, what we learned at school concerning the early conquests of the roman people; and if Livy were dismissed as a mere romancer, yet, in taking up the latin language, as a whole, and in running through its vocabulary, and in considering its idioms, we should find no room left for a question, whether the people to whom the language of Livy, Sallust, Tacitus, was vernacular, were a military people: is it possible to believe them to have been the inert cultivators of the soil; or a nation of shopkeepers? Let the entire roman history be repudiated; yet give us only the roman language, and we should readily recover, from that source alone, an authentic record of those successive triumphs, which at length made the Cæsars the lords of the world.

Aristotle may have taught a false system of the universe, and Plato may have dreamed in politics and morals; but can we turn over the pages of a greek lexicon, and affect to doubt whether the greek mind was of philosophic cast? With the greek language before us, in its mere words and idioms, we want no historians, we want no poets, we want no marbles, we want no temples, to assure us that the race of men using that tongue, were, in mind and taste, all that historians, poets, marbles, temples, show them to have been.

And it deserves particularly to be noted, that, while the languages of civilized races at large furnish evidence on all points touching man's nature, physical, intellectual, and moral, so those especial refinements, which characterize this or that language, and which have resulted from the eminent attainments of the people using it, serve to exhibit that one rudiment of human nature, as we might say magnified, and its inner structure expanded. It is not in the rude speech of nomadic hordes, or in the talk of the fish-eaters of a desolate shore, that we are to look for the record of the genuine rudiments of human nature; but rather in the copiousness

of tongues which have conveyed the choicest refinements of those rudiments.

Were it questioned whether man be an imaginative being, formed to catch analogies, and to be charmed with resemblance; three-fourths of every language, barbarous or civilized, attests the fact; nor is this evidence touched by any instances of what may be false in taste, or factitious, in the literature of the people.

Or is the question, "Am I responsible—am I a moral agent—am I to be held accountable for my temper, dispositions, and conduct; and am I so constituted as that a future retribution will be a fit issue of my present course of life?" If this be the question, it is answered at once concisely, and conclusively, by simply appealing to the mere words that must be employed to express it.

But if on any account we should think it well seriously to go into controversy with one propounding so strange a doubt, it could be thought nothing more than reasonable to require him to spread out so formidable a query in some variety of terms. We should ask him then to favour us with synonymes, and equivalents; and to set his difficulty clear of ambiguity, by a liberal adduction of instances and illustrations. Who could decline so equitable a request?

If we suppose then our objector to have complied;—he stands convinced:—at least, if his mind have been trained to habits of logical inquiry, he will not fail to see that, in describing the moral nature, with the intent to deny it, he has unwittingly affirmed it; and we might say to him,—'More convincing than any syllogisms, or than any discursive argument, in proof of the reality of that moral scheme which you call in question, are the words (considered as products of the human mind) to which you have been compelled to have recourse in enouncing your scepticism. The system we live under, is in fact a moral system in the

highest sense, because among all people with whom human nature has been at all expanded, a copious vocabulary of terms is found, to which no sense could be assigned in a world of beings, either purely animal, or purely intellectual.

If man be not a moral agent, and if his sphere in this respect do not immeasurably transcend that of the sentient orders around him, how comes he to talk as if he were? If, in regard to a moral system, he be only a brute of finer form, born of the earth and returning to it, whence is it that, in respect of virtue and vice, of good and evil, the dialect of heaven rolls over his lips? When was it, and how, that he stole the vocabulary of the skies?

You may choose to say, That men's notions of virtue and vice are, and ever have been, contorted; that they have been used to call good evil, and evil good. You may say, That the notions attached to these terms are variable, and the terms themselves convertible; you may say, That conscience is a fallacious adviser, That notions of honour impel men to acts of shame, and that reward and punishment fall as often inversely, as directly, upon merit and demerit. Or you may affirm, That man's actual position, creature of circumstances as he is, and yet held responsible, is severe, undesirable, and melancholy in its consequences. You may say this, or more of the sort; and yet you cannot even murmur your complaints, without establishing the very principles on the ground of which, *first*, a moral system may be incontestably proved; and, *secondly*, the actual moral system shown not to contradict the divine attributes: and, clearly, you can never affirm it to be *unjust* to treat man as responsible for his dispositions and actions, without virtually admitting every postulate of the most refined moral science; for, plainly, there can be no *injustice* within a system which admits of no *justice:* there can be no cruelty, where there might not be goodness; nor could any abstractions of this order have

been named, or discoursed of, except in a community of beings, who, in fact, are conversant with whatever necessitates the inference that they are held accountable to supreme justice, and will hereafter be reckoned with. Certain modes of treatment may be *severe*, only on this supposition—that they have place in a system which *would have admitted* lenient modes of treatment; and *such a system*, by the very statement, is abstractedly good; it is a benevolently constructed system, and *therefore* the conception of a benevolent mind.

But some speak as if they supposed our primary notions of moral qualities to have been taught us. Nothing, however, can be more unphilosophical than to attribute any permanent and universally diffused modes of feeling to the influence, and interested teaching of some one class of the community. Our notions of morality, of justice, virtue, responsibility, retribution, come they from the lips of the priest? Nay; whence is the priest himself, and whence those emotions, working in all men's bosoms, upon which he founds his power over his fellows? Is not the priest, and are not the sentiments to which he appeals, part and parcel of the machinery of the human system? To affirm, as some have done, that priests are the authors of religion and moral sentiment, is a sort of upside-down logic, not easily understood. Surely it were more philosophical to invert the terms of the proposition, and to affirm that religion and moral sentiment, are the authors of priests? 'Men,' say you, 'have been ill-taught on these subjects, and grossly practised upon by the crafty.' Grant it. But now make the attempt, in any such way, to mislead and pervert some race of beings incapable of admitting the purer truths which you would put in the place of such errors! Find me a world of beings to whom you *could* teach atheism, and I will undertake to convert many of them, at least, to a true theology. And thus also, those who would persuade men that they are not respon-

sible, could not make even their first lesson understood, if the fact were not that men *are so*, and that they know it.

But we will suppose that those whose benevolence would prompt them to run about the world, for the purpose of disabusing their fellows of the nurse-born and priest-gotten notions of responsibility, and of a future reckoning, would be likely to enhance the value of their mission, and to prove the necessity of their interference, by setting forth, in its particulars, the depth, intimacy, and universality of the mischievous notions of which they are soon to rid the earth. These apostles then, we will not say of *immorality*, but of *non-morality*, tell us that—'So wide-spread are the errors they will have to expose, that the last recesses of savage life must be penetrated, and man followed into the wilderness, till we find him the naked troglodyte—nature's own child, before the missionaries of the new philosophy need cease their labours, or can confess that they have at length found disciples who are proficients in this philosophy, *by instinct*, and who have nothing to learn from their masters.'

So it is that, just where christian missionaries begin their labours—the missionaries of the new philosophy would end them, as finding their doctrine already understood, and practised.

'Yes,' say you, 'consoling it is to think, that, wide-spread as is the heresy concerning virtue, duty, and a judgment to come, there *are* men, altogether clean of this infection. If we will but wander through the solitudes of Australian deserts, and penetrate pathless jungles, or visit hitherto unvisited islets of the ocean, we shall yet find sages without books, who are troubled by no terrors of conscience, and who (convey to them only a few syllables of the dialect of the true and new philosophy) would coolly tell us, after having dined upon the flesh of their fellows, "that the distinctions between right and wrong are altogether arbitrary,

and that the notion of virtue is the prejudice of a northern latitude."'

But our apostles of the new truths, turning towards the civilized, and half civilized races of mankind, will point us to all religious institutes, to all national politics, to every known scheme of social existence, to every mode of domestic life, as furnishing reasons why they should instantly set out on their errand. Who shall number the fruitless sufferings that are springing every day from these notions of right and wrong? — 'Look,' say they, 'at the tumultuous crowd, phrenzied to deeds of blood, by the demagogue, who is telling the deluded people that they are *injured*, and that their cause is a *holy cause*, the cause of *truth* and *justice!* look to the field of battle, whereon nations are marshalled, and are to bleed in defence, not of their homes merely, but of their *altars!* or go into the wilderness, and gaze, in wonder, upon the anchoret, who thinks to anticipate and appease a future justice by a long life of self-inflicted torture! or descend into the dungeon, where the victim of oppression forgets almost the physical woe and privation he endures, while stung with the anguish of hopeless resentment! Now only tell the sufferer that justice and injustice are alike illusions; and that the despot who has held him there from youth to age, *could not possibly have done otherwise than he has*, inasmuch as he, and all, are the creatures of necessity—say these things to the wretch, and you abstract at once the bitterness from his cup; you draw the poisoned barb from the wound; you restore him, as by a charm, if not to happiness, to peace.

'Or change the scene. Why (had not the nurse beguiled him) does the infant, conscious of some petty wrong, hide his crimson with his chubby hands? Or how is it, except that she has been ill-taught, that the same crimson so often flushes the cheek of innocence and beauty? Every contrast we can imagine speaks to the same purpose. Whence the

paleness and the flush that come and go on the cheek of the murderer, about to die on the scaffold?—Had not these same illusions, the terrors of conscience, as we call them, been early instilled into him, death would have had to him no terrors, but such as attach to the animal instinct.' Nay, were it not for the prevalence of these very notions, he would never have been arraigned as guilty, any more than the man who is adjudged to have committed justifiable homicide. In truth the foulest murder, philosophically spoken of, *is*—Justifiable homicide. Is there not reason enough then, say the missionaries of the new philosophy, why we should hasten to relieve our fellow-men from the pains and torments which spring from these illusory notions? — Nay, read these very same facts in another sense; read them in the light of common sense, *true* philosophy, and religion—and acknowledge the simple truth, that man *is*, in the fullest meaning of the term, a moral agent, that he *knows* and *feels* himself to be the subject of invisible government, and that his mental conformation impels him to look forward to a day when he shall have to confront truth and justice. Yes, man well knows that he *is* accountable, for his dispositions, and for his actions—*now*, to his fellows, *hereafter*, to the Supreme.

Human responsibility then, using the term in its highest sense, is not an opinion to be proved; but a principal and obvious fact in the natural history of man. The consciousness of responsibility attaches to all men; and the only seeming exceptions (for they are not really such) are of two kinds—namely—that of individuals or races, long brutalized by sensuality and ferocity; and that of a handful of sophists, who have talked themselves, and one another, out of common sense, until they no longer know where to find, within their bosoms, any genuine sentiments.

Our task then is not to prove the fact of human responsibility, as if it might be questioned; but so to

spread it out in its constituents and in its effects, as to leave no room for a contrary supposition.

The doctrine of responsibility will present itself, as the result of—

An analysis of man's nature, individually; of—

An explication of the structure of the social system, and of—

A calculation (if we might so speak) of the orbit which this social system is pursuing, on the field of the universe.

But here let it be well understood, that our present line of argument is purely physical, and our method strictly inductive. We are asking concerning THE NATURAL HISTORY OF MAN, visible chief as he is, of the terrestrial orders; and while we assume nothing which does not manifestly attach to that nature, we exclude nothing that *does* attach to it. While we borrow no aid (although we might do so) from sources superior to a physical inquiry, so we denounce any endeavour that might be made to snatch from us certain classes of the phenomena, as if such and such elements of human nature were factitious, and had been thrust upon it, by knowing members of the community.

A most philosophic conceit truly were it, to pretend that men, generally, or that some band of men, have forged a rudiment of our physical, moral, or intellectual constitution! That a few have made themselves the authors of a supposititious sense—have outwitted dame nature, entering her treasure-house, and thence stealing endowments which she had reserved to be bestowed upon some more favoured members of her great family! Are we now at length to be made to believe that eyes have been thrust into men's orbits by opticians, that he owes his teeth to dentists, and his feet to the company of cordwainers? All this we shall believe, or more, when we admit that it is schoolmasters who have coaxed men into their conceit of rationality; kings and

legislators who have persuaded them that they ought to be subject to law; and priests who have created conscience, and taught men that they are amenable to invisible power!

Again, at the outset of our *physical* inquiry, we straitly exclude any attempted interference of metaphysical abstractions upon this ground. Using the prerogatives of the modern physical logic, we do not allow any thing that has been built up in the legitimate modes of induction, to be blown down by metaphysic gusts. *Real science* is occupied with the ascertained relations of things filling a middle region, or terra firma, whereon the foot of man may steadily pursue its way. This terra firma has, in its rear, a bottomless gulf of unfixed abstractions: it has in its front the interminable, unexplored fields, which are to be the inheritance of our successors: meantime nothing that may be tossed up on the surface of the chaos behind us, can make us *unknow*, what we *know*, concerning things near us.

The logic of modern philosophy, I mean, *true* philosophy, secures, for each separate department of science, the most absolute independence of every other, within its proper limits. To the operation of this very law is to be attributed that remarkable intercommunity, accordance, and harmony of purpose, which characterize and authenticate the philosophy of the nineteenth century. No such harmony has heretofore been seen, except when enforced by tyranny. There have indeed been times when Aristotle and the pope have kept the peace in the world of mind, by declaring that so and so *could not* be true, and *must not* be taught. But these times have gone by, unless indeed the new philosophy is to revive a similar despotism.

To this point, vitally important as it is, and yet incidental to our subject, a few moments only of explanation can be given. A great logical principle, strangely overlooked by some at present, and which it would take time to unfold, may be popularly illustrated, in an instance.—

Every one knows that certain ingenious theorists, and the philosophic Berkeley as their prince, have, from time to time, and with a show of irresistible reasoning, boldly denied the existence, nay, even the possibility, of an external world. "There *is* nothing," say these philosophers, "there *can be* nothing, in the universe, but MIND; or even if there were, it could never become known to us." Be it so, and let us witness this demolition of the solid frame-work of nature; and watch the process, while the buttresses of the material world are shook by the metaphysic ram's-head, its firmly-cemented masses loosened, its high towers—the mountain ridges of nature made to tremble, crumble, fall; and while the ruins are beaten into dust, the dust sublimated into vapour, the vapour itself made to vanish, and we are left alone in the bottomless, vaultless, universe of immaterial existence!

Be it so: yet allow us, in imagination, to reassemble the dissipated elements, and to suppose all things in the very position in which we lately left them; and let us, stepping down from the sublime of philosophy, to the level of vulgar life, assume that such a proposal as this were before us, namely—The throwing an eighth bridge over the Thames. Does then a proposal of this sort seem in any degree the less reasonable, on account of the demonstration we have listened to, of the nonentity and the impossibility of an external world? or shall we defer our decision, a six months, in expectation that, by that time, public opinion will so have come round to Berkeleyism, as that even the most zealous promoters of the scheme will themselves have ceased to think it desirable; for indeed what reasonable man could wish to spend a million of money in throwing a nonentity bridge, over a nonentity river, for the accommodation of a nonentity traffic? There is a simple answer to any such endeavours to bring metaphysical enigmas in contact with the business of life.—Whether the Thames be a *real* river

or only an *idea* of a river, so long as there be (whether a real or an imaginary) motive for crossing it, there will be a sufficient reason for building, or for seeming to build, a bridge over it. All we have to do with in *any case*, is—*the relations* of things — which *relations* are, in no way altered by any theory we may admit, concerning the abstract nature of those things. Take another instance—Let it be affirmed that the metals, one and all, instead of being solids, are mere powers of repulsion, attaching to an invisible and imponderable ether.—This may be; and yet the *comparative* hardness, fusibility, ductility, and malleability of gold, silver, copper, iron, remaining the same, our *theory* can have *no practical* bearing, either upon chemical science, or upon the metallurgic arts. No supposition that does not disturb the *relation* borne by one quantity or quality to another, can affect art or practice. This simple principle carries a sufficient reply to all metaphysic sophisms—repelling, even when not refuting them.

But we may come even a little nearer to certain absurdities, which have actually found zealous advocates. Let it be supposed then that, with or without the leave of idealists, the proposal to build the aforesaid bridge were accepted. For carrying it into execution, we must engage the assistance, not merely of masons, and inferior craftsmen; but of men of science, whose studies have given them a knowledge of the properties and qualities of the materials to be used, along with a thorough acquaintance, as well with the *applicate*, as with the *abstract* branches of the mathematics; for it is clear that those only can safely be entrusted with the enterprize, who know how to make a choice among the several kinds of *stone*, and the several orders of *curves*. But here a difficulty meets us; for the entire deductions of mathematical science flow from a few axioms, or principles, alleged to be self-evident. To go about to establish these first principles, we are told, would be absurd and fruitless. Not so fast—

some of the most profound minds, in pondering these very axioms, and in endeavouring to trace them down to their roots in the human mind, and in attempting so to express them as to keep clear at once of contradictions, and of identical propositions, have confessed themselves to be baffled! Mathematical axioms overlay (as one might say) metaphysical axioms; and the darkness of the latter appears through the former.

From beneath this cloud then are we to walk forth; or must we remain? To walk forth, acting on the principle above named—That genuine science consists *in the knowledge and application of relations*, which relations, when once ascertained in the modes respectively proper to them, are not liable to be disturbed by speculations taking a higher range. Man stands, as we have said, upon a terra-firma, where he may know certainly whatever immediately affects his agencies and interests. In other words, no purely metaphysic question, in whatever way determined, can touch what is already matter of experience or demonstration.

Besides, inasmuch as the highest abstractions are, *by the very terms, universals*, if they touch *any* thing, *practically*, they must touch *every thing;* and every thing in precisely *the same sense*, and in an *equal degree*. No one at all accustomed to abstract reasoning can need to have so simple a truism expounded. Yet it is a fact, that, while it has often been attempted to drive the most terrific consequences of metaphysic theories over the ground of morals and religion, the common business of life, and the engagements of the industrious, although standing *precisely in the same relationship* to these theories, have been left untouched. It would seem as if, while Religion had got her sleeve caught in the cogs of the metaphysic machinery of the universe, Natural science, and gainful Industry, had luckily saved themselves from any such entanglement! But how manifest it is that, if the doctrine of fate, or any other doctrine, had *any* power

to stay a man in the cultivation of virtue, it has the *same power* to stop him in digging his field?

One who possesses a diamond cross puts it in a strong box, in leaving his home; or he gives it in charge to a faithful servant—with the words—'remember what is the value of this jewel.' But a father, in sending a son abroad into the world, says, 'remember that your soul is of inestimable value, and should be your first care.' Is *this* parental advice to be regarded as nugatory and absurd, inasmuch as the soul, even if it survive the body, is the passive creature of destiny? If so, then is the diamond cross also a sharer in that same law of destiny; and it should be thought futile, either to awaken the servant's sense of the value of the trust, or to lock the casket in which it is placed;—in fact, the jewel would be equally safe, whether thrown into the street, or built into the iron-bound foundations of a castle.

If all men had logical heads, metaphysic dogmas might be regarded as matters of absolute indifference:—they work mischief only in confused brains, just as the flaring comet, while coolly gazed at by the astronomer, who knows what it is he is looking at, actually stirs revolutions, and overthrows empires, among superstitious nations.

Ill-disciplined, or ill-constructed minds will, however, always be liable to be led astray by illusions of this kind: hence the necessity of again and again protesting against them. Unhappily, absurdities that have been often exposed, in scientific treatises, are perpetually bursting up anew from the untilled wastes of the popular mind. Thus it is that we still hear such things as these—'When the doctrine of necessity' (mark it, whether true or false, *a high abstraction*) 'when the doctrine of necessity comes to be generally understood and admitted; and is applied, as a *practical principle*, to men's every day conduct, temper, and dispositions; then'—why then, it will bring in a millennium of peace and felicity! Those who speak thus may be assured

that, with them, the abstractive faculty is very slenderly developed: the doctrine of necessity can come to be a *practical principle*, only when it impels all men, women, and children, to stand staring each other in the face, in stagnant astonishment, until they perish. Neither the idealism of Berkeley, nor the fatalism of Hume, is at all understood by any one who thinks the one theory or the other, to be capable of being hitched upon the movements of common life.

In fact, none have ever made the attempt except in relation to certain picked instances, and when they have seemed to be hunting for any whimsical evasion of disagreeable duties. A philosopher persuaded himself that all the men and women around him were mere phantoms. — Nevertheless, as often as he walked the streets, he was used to accost, with a wonted greeting, all his familiars whom he might meet; and he then only made a practical use of his creed, when he happened to see, on his path, some one whom he had an especial reason for not wishing to recognize! Such is the consistency of those whose lofty speculations never bar their entrance to the market, or the theatre; but stand in the way, like spectres, when they would go to church.

In thus speaking, we are very far from intending to inveigh, as some have inconsiderately done, against the doctrine of necessity, as if it were *in itself* of pernicious influence. Such a ground of exception involves a misunderstanding, or an absurdity, as great as that of those who espouse the doctrine on the alleged ground of its useful tendency. It has *no* influence, *no* tendency, *no* bearing whatever upon practice; *no* meaning, interpretable in the language of common life. The doctrine of necessity, *in itself*, and not seasoned with acrid admixtures of theological strife, is as tasteless as the white of an egg. As well expect vegetable life to be animated, and our wintry wastes to be covered with verdure,

warmed by the coruscations of the Aurora Borealis, as look for life, and health, to be shed over the surface of society, from the thin regions of metaphysic speculation. A man who casts anchor in a storm with the angler's line and hook, or who unfurls to the hurricane, as his mainsail, a spider's web, is absurd only inasmuch as he employs means *insufficient* for his end, though not incongruous. But what is the absurdity of one who would think to bind the timbers of a raft by logic, or believe it might be paddled by syllogisms?

That this absolute exclusion of ulterior abstractions, of whatever kind, from the enclosure of men's practical interests, will not be quarrelled with by clear-headed men, I confidently assume.*

Our course of inquiry then, in the present instance, is purely physical. We have to do with nothing but facts and phenomena, while we inquire, in relation to the question of man's responsibility, FIRST, concerning his individual structure; SECONDLY, concerning the structure of the social system; and THIRDLY, concerning the structure of the universe, so far as that structure may safely be inferred from those elements of it with which we are acquainted.

Be it understood that this evening I use the term *responsibility*, in the fullest, highest, and most absolute sense, in which it has at any time been employed by moralists; and that, when I affirm man to be accountable, I do so to the whole extent which christianity implies.

What then is the structure of man, individually, as a sentient and voluntary agent? and especially what is it as compared with the structure of other sentient and voluntary

* *Ulterior abstractions*:—the effort of the mind to resolve the elements of thought into their elements; or to carry analysis a step further than either the nature of things, or the nature and powers of the mind permits. Mathematical science affords the best and most intelligible illustration of the highly important distinction between *ascertained relations*, which are man's province, and indeterminate speculations, or ulterior abstractions, which have no practical tendency.

agents—the brute orders around him? what is it as indicating his responsibility, or the reverse?

Man, in common with the animated orders around him, is so constituted as to be entrusted with the care of his own preservation and well-being. To enable him, and them, to secure this end, he, and they, *alike*, are made conscious of many of the properties of the external world; and he, and they, alike, command a locomotive machinery, and are endowed with instincts and propensities, severally tending to well-being and yet not always, in fact, securing it; inasmuch as the interference of one desire with another, under especial circumstances, not seldom exposes the individual to privations, injuries, and even destruction. So does the urgency of famine sometimes impel the lion or the wolf to brave dangers, which, in a less famished condition, his instinct of caution would have instructed him to avoid.

As a necessary consequence of this universal law of animal, as distinguished from vegetable life, and which makes each individual, to a certain extent, the steward of his own interests, all alike, are subjected to another law, clearly beneficent in its intention, and actually so in its ordinary operation; although calamitous in frequent instances. This law makes the well-being of each individual, in each moment of his existence, a consequence, or *product* of his own agency or conduct, in some previous era, proximate, or remote. Or, to state the same general fact in other terms, the well-being of a sentient, voluntary, locomotive animal, is, in each successive moment of his existence, a compound result of many causes, or influences; among which his individual agency is the *directive cause*—the determining reason. For the manifest purpose of conserving individual life to as late a period as may consist with the economic arrangements of the whole system, each animal, beside his discriminating senses, enabling him to select his food, and beside his weapons of defence, and his instinct of self-preservation, is

endowed with a principle of mental association, fitting him to admit a degree of education, and to acquire some rudiments of personal prudence, under the training of experience. Hence it is that the senior animals, in most species, are more astute, and hard to be entrapped than the juniors. Sportsmen find the use of the gun in January, to be a more difficult exercise than it had been in September. This capability of learning, by experience, what instincts would never suggest, is a proper accompaniment of the law which intrusts the individual with the care of his own welfare.

And here, let it be observed, that, in proportion as the faculties of any species are complicated, and in proportion to the structural perfection of each species, does the well-being of the individual, at any era of its existence, depend *more* upon its spontaneous agency, and *less* upon external causes. The oyster yawns to the coming and the ebbing ocean—a passive recipient of benefits he must wait for; nor is the voluntary principle, in such an animal, much more than are chemical affinities, to a vegetable. But the fox which has survived to take the benefit of several runs, has baffled his pursuers by skill acquired; and in such an instance, the agency of the individual bears *a large proportion* to those external circumstances which were combined in the event. This *relative importance* of personal agency, as the ruling cause of an animal's well-being, is enhanced continually, as we ascend the scale of mental development.

Roughly speaking, if, in the *to-day's* well-being of the horse, the dog, the elephant, yesterday's individual agency is as one to four, compared with the influence of external circumstances; and if a similar proportion hold with the infant members of the human family, and with the savage; in the *to-day's* well-being of adult, civilized man, the personal agency, compared with external influences, may be taken as four to one. This same rule might serve indeed as a gauge of faculty and development. It is a rule that, the

more mind, power, culture, *so much the more* is the well-being of each era the sheer product of personal agency in some preceding era. The less mind, the less power, the less culture, just so much the more is any being 'the creature of circumstances.' Or, to state the same principle otherwise, persuade any being (capable of persuasion) that he *is* the mere creature of circumstances, thereby lessening, in his own view, the importance of his personal agency; and forthwith he becomes in fact, what you have persuaded him that he is. Your doctrine has served to lead him down, two or three steps, or more, on the scale of mind. On the contrary, find one who, from whatever cause, had desponded as to the possible efficacy of his personal agency; awaken him to a sense of the range that is allowed to it, and bring him confidently to believe in the force of mind; and he is, as it were, reborn into the family of mind.

This, the *first* condition of all animal existence, namely, the dependence, as to well-being, of the present, upon the past personal agency, and of the future upon the present, brings with it, in the higher species of animals, and pre-eminently so in the human species, a SECOND capital condition, which is this—That a knowledge, or recollection of the first-named law, comes, by habit, to constitute the *governing motive* of that personal agency. We feel to-day, that what we *are*, is the product, in great measure, of what we *did* yesterday: this feeling rules, more or less, what we shall *do* to-day; and so, what we shall *be* to-morrow. This causal continuity of rational life, is the ground of all progress in skill, caution, and practical wisdom. It is this which, at once, restrains certain instincts, incites others, and regulates and harmonizes all; and therefore is, as it were, the mistress of our destiny: or it is, so far as we deserve to be called rational beings, and are tending onwards. If any agent have but a dull consciousness of the dependence of the future upon the present, or if particular instincts have gained a momentum which

overpowers it; or, if any being come among circumstances so new, as that his acquired anticipations fail him; then, and in any such case, he lies exposed to ills, or to absolute destruction.

On the contrary, if any being has acquired an extensive and exact knowledge of the tendencies of the several modes in which his personal agency may operate, and if this knowledge be so pondered, and so habitually recurred to, as that it have come to have more weight than any single instinct or propensity, *then*, under ordinary circumstances, such a being will have secured for himself a large share of good; or, at least, will have averted the worst evils.

But mark the difference between man and the brute orders, in this respect.—The elephant, to a certain extent, is cognizant of the consequences of his actions; yet to a very limited extent; and not so as to control his more powerful instincts: this recollection rules him only in the unimpassioned detail, or, as we might say, the *etiquette* of his behaviour towards man. Meanwhile man, the elephant's keeper, is cognizant of these consequences so as to be ruled ordinarily by a recollection of them. Hence it is *that he has made himself the elephant's keeper*. How could the puny biped have climbed to a throne on the neck of the mighty and knowing quadruped, or have come to rule his giant will with a bodkin, a look, or a whisper, had not nature conferred upon him this very prerogative—namely—a paramount and habitual regard to the remote consequences of his present conduct. It was the blind instincts of the elephant, at the first, that led him within the toils of the hunter;—while at the same moment the hunter's instincts, *as an animal*—his sense of hunger and of thirst, his apprehension of danger, and love of ease, and his desire of life itself, have all been held in abeyance, by the forethought of the signal advantages he might derive from the services of the

elephant, and which has impelled him to endure the severest privations, and to encounter the most extreme perils, animated by the contingent hope of achieving his purpose.

EDUCATION may be described as consisting of two operations, *the one*, that of imparting a correct knowledge of the laws which regulate the dependence of future well-being upon present conduct—and *the other* operation, that of giving, by habit, a sovereign influence to this same knowledge. Man therefore is susceptible of immensely more education than the brute, because *he* can know and remember this dependence.

LAW is the propounding of some specific future consequence to those who are capable of recollecting it, and of giving this recollection a due place among the motives of their conduct. The brute orders are disciplined by *habit;* they are not governed by *law*, and the same is true of infancy.

RESPONSIBILITY is measured by the capacity of the individual to know the dependence of the future upon the present, and to govern himself by that recollection.

In training then a being like man, we lift him to the level which nature designed him to occupy, when we do whatever may be done to enhance and invigorate his sense of responsibility. But if we would effectually and rapidly sensualize him, we need do nothing more than despoil him of this sense, or blunt it. So dealt with, he becomes a brute, only wanting those conservative instincts which nature has kindly bestowed, where she had *not* bestowed reason. In the words of a notorious philosopher of the past age, let men be told that there are in the world no causes but physical causes, and that these are all uniform and irresistible, and they become themselves uniformly, and irresistibly, ferocious and sensual.*

* Il n'y a qu'une sorte de causes, à proprement parler; ce sont les causes physiques. Il n'y a qu'une sorte de nécessité, c'est la même pour tous

Man's constitution, as *Trustee of his own well-being*, makes itself seen in whatever light we view him.

It does not appear that any of the brute orders, even those whose sagacity bears the nearest resemblance to human intelligence, ever *recognise their fault*, or endure the anguish of remorse, when they may happen to suffer pain or privation, as the consequence of a disregard of what should have been remembered. The wolf does not, as we suppose, rave at his own folly, in having leapt, without thought, into the pit.

It is otherwise with man.—'Ah, had I wist!' is the mournful ejaculation forced from him as often as his passion, his pride, his over-weening ambition, his self-indulgence, have brought him into the meshes of calamity. Remorse, the most prompt and involuntary of our emotions, is a torment super-added to suffering, whenever that suffering has resulted from our disregard of the dependence of the future upon the present. Remorse is man's dread prerogative, and the natural accompaniment of his constitution as a knowing, voluntary agent, left in trust with his own welfare, and that of others. Remorse, if we exclude the notion of responsibility, is an enigma in human nature, never to be explained. Had there in fact been no *Trustee-ship*, there could have been no anguish in the recollection of delinquency. That most terrible of pains, were it here to utter its moanings, would supersede argument, on our present theme.

But there are many ways in which the innate feeling of responsibility displays itself.—A man's sense, in any case, of having acquitted himself poorly, as the trustee of his own welfare, and of having forfeited advantages he might have secured, and of having drawn upon himself evils he might have avoided, is keenly painful.—On the other hand, a

les êtres. The popular comment upon this doctrine, and its consequence, as given by Diderot himself—That those who, in any way, incommode the social system should be *got rid of*—not punished, was expressed in the reign of terror.

lively feeling of self-gratulation, attends the consciousness of having, by continuous and arduous efforts, by skill, courage, self-control, achieved the object of one's fondest wishes:—for instance, if a man have acquired wealth and power. This pleasurable sense, the proper attendant as it is, upon the constitution of a being who is so constituted as to control his own destiny, is, not less than remorse, an enigma, if man's nature be not such as we now suppose. The pain in the one case, and the pleasure in the other, are radii, produced indeed from opposite sides of the circle, but pointing to the same centre, and indicating the same truth.

But let us follow some of the more complicated emotions of human nature, and see if it be possible to read these facts in any other sense than the one we assume. The man who, by negligence, or self-indulgence, has poorly played his cards, and is the loser in the game of life, we will suppose to be brought in some manner upon the stage, where the eyes of thousands are directed towards his disgrace and ruin. Instantly a new feeling heaves his bosom. He had thought *remorse* enough; but he now finds that *shame* gives him a far keener sense of its stings. He had been wretched in his solitary garret, but *now*, penetrated with shame, existence is intolerable. Watch him as he slinks away to his den of unseen woe, where he will almost persuade himself to be again happy, in being allowed to exchange the thrilling anguish of shame, for the dull gnawings of remorse.

Or look to the obverse of this very instance. The diligent steward of certain talents, who has distanced competitors, and won the prize of his ambition, is before us. Let him be supposed a pure selfist, glorying, not in beneficent deeds, but in his laurels: as he urges his car through the crowd, all voices greet him as great; for 'men will praise thee when thou doest well for thyself.' Now the emotion which stifles the breath, and flushes the cheek of this demigod, can mean nothing in the philosophy of human nature, unless it be

taken as the proper correlative of those pains, and sense of shame, which we have just above referred to. We *are*, and we *know* it, and all around us know it, and feel it, the *responsible trustees of our personal welfare.* To fail in this trust is misery: to succeed is bliss; and this, not simply on account of mere loss or gain; but much more as being in consequence, blameworthy, or praiseworthy.

The poignant recollection of having acquitted ourselves well, or ill; vigilantly, or remissly; faithfully, or falsely; as the trustees of well-being, when it extends itself beyond the narrow circle of the selfish passions, by no means undergoes a diminution of its force. Nay, the contrary is the fact, and we find, on this ground, an ominous indication of man's real, though now dimly revealed relationship to a greater system than the present. A remarkable fact it is, that the wider the circle which these emotions embrace, the more do they swell; so that the movement which was but a ripple at the centre, becomes a mantling wave when it reaches the margin of the lake.

To take an obvious instance.—The sensitive, but faulty father, who finds himself descending with a fond wife and children from his patrimonial rank, to the level of destitution and contempt, will teach us the same truth. Let us listen to his moans—'All this,' he says, '*is my fault*—the fruit of my folly, of my presumption, of my pride. Oh that the suffering also were all my own! I could bear these miseries, and more;—any thing, that should centre upon myself—alone; any woe that should spend itself upon my guilty head: but my wife, my children, must I see *them* suffer, must I gaze at their wan cheeks, must I look on, whilst *they* are repelled from the doors of the proud: *this* I cannot bear; *this* is torment insufferable.'

Are then such emotions factitious; have men learned them in some school of romance? No indeed; and every bosom uncorrupted, confesses that they are the workings of

nature: we are speaking of feelings which, if any one want them, we will not call him man.—Let any one say if he could admire a character which should exclude all these painful sensibilities in the instance supposed.

Suffering is rarely *mere* suffering; but almost always mingles itself, in some manner, with *this principal element of our nature*, the sense of right and wrong, and of duty or delinquency toward others. Thus are we constituted; and so has the wise and beneficent Creator, in fitting man to act his part on the high stage of responsibility, and in qualifying him to receive, in trust, the welfare of those around him, blended the elements of his moral nature, as that, whenever the sense of responsibility comes to bear upon the benevolent affections, an intensity of emotion is generated, giving to the individual of ordinary strength, the temporary energy of a giant.

We may glance for a moment at the union of the sense of responsibility with the emotions of hope and fear. An ominous combination truly is this, whispering of things which the eye of man has not as yet seen. Guilt and dread—the consciousness of crime, and the trembling forethought of retribution, combine within the human bosom, so readily, and with so forcible a collapse, and so uniformly, as to compel us to acknowledge that they do so by the ordinance of nature. The doer of wrong expects wrath. Nature originates this connexion; and superstition and religion are the several expressions of it. You tell us that the slumber of the guilty would never have been troubled by thoughts of punishment, if men had never been preached to. Whence has come that very preaching? is it from heaven, or of men? If from heaven, it must be held a true and kind warning; but if of men, then it is itself a part of the machinery of the moral system, and therefore must have a final cause and a meaning.

Look to the moral sense combining itself with hope. It

does indeed belong to lofty wisdom and virtue to go on doing good, even when no eye can see, no ear hear, and when no earthly recompense can be expected. But it does *not* belong to wisdom and virtue—it never has, to sever itself from the recollection of Him who "seeth in secret," and whose approval (recompense or none) is alone an infinite reward. In such cases that hope of future good to be bestowed which is instinctively connected with the consciousness of well-doing, merges itself in a more profound feeling;—the rivulet is lost in the ocean; or we might say, that the candle of hope, which is to cheer the darksome path of the just, through this world of gloom, seems itself to have gone out, when it is carried near to the dazzling confines of eternal day.

That sense of *right*, which is the rudiment of virtue, and the fulcrum of responsibility, may slumber in a man's bosom from year to year, from youth to manhood; but it is awakened in a moment by witnessing some act of atrocious oppression, or cruelty: a stranger perhaps is the victim; but how is that sense maddened if the victim be one most dear—a darling child! and it is more than maddened, it is crazed, and infatuation is added to phrensy when the triumph of the oppressor, and his long impunity, seem to mock our pain, and to deny that there is justice above. A settled revenge then becomes the cancer of the heart. Intolerable are its pains; and yet dangerous and criminal as is this passion, it does but carry out, to an excess, *the highest emotion of our nature;* inasmuch as it is but an exaggeration of the feeling which makes man the friend and adherent of JUSTICE, and the foe of wrong. Revenge is the sense of *right*, tortured, until it has become ghastly.

Anger is an out-burst of the sense of right and wrong, at a moment when an injury may be repelled by force and courage. Anger disappointed of its intention, and become

a chronic sentiment, assumes the character of malignity. And yet, even the most malign minds, and those the most depraved by the long indulgence of the worst emotions, are still seen to justify nature, by labouring to find out reasons why they *ought* to abhor the object of their hatred. And what is the foulest calumny, but an indirect homage paid to virtue, and an acknowledgment of the unchangeable principles of the moral system, inasmuch as whoever is to be held up as an object of public contempt, must first be shewn to be worthy of it!

In the present state, unless an extraordinary force were allowed to the principle of self-love, the exigences of self-preservation could hardly be provided for. Were this prejudice of the individual much weakened, it would often happen that he would be liable to perish in mere default of the personal energy requisite for his defence or support. But we have only to suppose men to have passed into a world where preservation and support are otherwise provided for, than by the means of personal exertions. In such a world, the disproportionate energy of self-love, would become languid from disuse, and the sense of right and wrong, continuing unabated, the instinct which impels us so vehemently to desire to see right and wrong adjusted, would gather a new force, and take a new direction. The desire of right, and the impatience under wrong, would begin to rage inward. Revenge, a viper which man had hatched in his bosom, bites that bosom. Revenge, blown to a new intensity, would kindle upon the material it found nearest at hand, and the guilty would suffer a sort of spontaneous combustion.

If man be indeed responsible for his *dispositions*, as well as his actions, we shall doubtless find every element of his intellectual conformation therewith agreeing; but if not, then the further we pursue our analysis, the more contradictions shall we encounter.

Tell a man whose limbs are affected by no disease, that, although he may operate freely on materials happening to lie toward his right hand, he is wholly passive, and must yield to the course of inevitable laws—that he is in fact palsied in relation to whatever lies on his left hand.—Do this, and you imitate those who, while they are exulting in the conquests which man has achieved by aid of the faculty of abstraction, over the movements, and affinities of the *material* world, yet affirm that *this same faculty*, is spell-bound when it would direct itself to the properties, powers, and affinities, of the *moral* world!

The point we are now considering deserves our best attention. Man, we say, is responsible for his *dispositions*, as well as for his *actions;* because nature has furnished him with faculties, which, if exerted, make him *the master of his dispositions;* as will appear.

Far more than by any animal superiority, and more even than by his lofty emotions, man is distinguished from the brute orders around him, by the faculty of abstraction, apart from which neither the distinctions of his animal structure, nor his profound emotions, would avail him much. Apart from the faculty of abstraction, there could be neither science, nor art, there could be no progress, no civilization. Apart from the faculty of abstraction, if men never fell into error, it would be only because they never could set a foot on the path that leads to truth. If this faculty lie dormant, as it does, almost, in savage tribes, the wretched horde straggles through the wilderness, far less blessed than the beasts with which it contends for the means of life.

All the arts of life, all philosophy, all literature, all social institutions, are its offspring. All that has come down to us of ancient civilization is its praise; all that we expect to be achieved by our successors, is to form its triumph. The faculty of abstraction is man's glory, and engine, and

the significant seal of the truth, That man was made in the image of Him who made the world.

Not merely do we see, and hear, and feel; not only do we note resemblances and differences, among the objects of perception, but we learn to *think separately of single qualities*, attaching to various objects, and variously combined with other properties. The sensible qualities of the external world are, by an involuntary process of the human mind, *set off* from their usual combinations, and are then dealt with, classified, and recombined at pleasure. So it is, that, although it be utterly beyond our power to conceive of *any other properties* than those with which experience has actually made us acquainted, we may conceive of infinitely diversified combinations of those properties. We cannot indeed invent new elements; but we might easily invent new worlds.

The human mind thus employs itself in a conjectural control over the adjustments of nature; and Nature herself tempts man to try his hand in her own workshop: she shows him that, as the properties and laws of the material world may be *thought of* as otherwise combined than they are, so that they may be actually otherwise combined, than they are. The hand seizes its material, and gives expression to what the abstractive and inventive faculties have devised. Thus the arts are born; and the same faculties, stimulated by their young successes, take a bolder course: all powers and laws of nature are inquired into, ascertained, and severally defined: philosophy is nurtured, and matured; art takes a new lesson from her younger sister, and man civilized, goes on moulding the material elements to his pleasure.

In carrying on this process, the mind is immensely aided by language, which finds names, not merely for individuals, species, genera, and orders; but for abstract qualities, and for general laws. Thus benefited by so pliable an instru-

ment, we make rapid advances in the work of accumulating, arranging, and applying our abstract notions. Thenceforward all reasonings are carried on by the means of the arbitrary symbols of abstract ideas. Language, which, if it were not the engine of the faculty of abstraction, would be little more copious than the cawing of rooks, comes to represent, not only all things *actual*, but all things *possible*.

Thus set on a path immeasurably raised above the level of any agencies of the brute orders, man thinks of, and reasons concerning, solidity, resistance, tenacity, weight, momentum, velocity; concerning affinities, attraction, repulsion, expansion, condensation, and every often-recurring phenomenon of the external world.

But it is far from being true that men move forward on the path of improvement, at the impulse only of necessity, or only of cupidity. If necessity be sent to awaken the child of reason, in the morning hour of his course, when once awakened he follows inducements that have brighter charms in his eye. The faculty of abstraction is possessed by men in various degrees: when in the highest degree, its exercise is attended with a tranquil, but intense enjoyment. The man of abstraction, his mind being otherwise soundly constituted, is the happiest of his species: with him, the most arduous labours are also the most vivid pleasures.

But now it is not the properties of the material world alone, that come within the scope of the faculty of abstraction; far from it; or if this could be questioned, we might find our answer very near at hand. Are the terms just now mentioned the *only* abstract terms which the languages of civilized man comprise? To what class belong such words as virtue, vice, goodness, malevolence, generosity, meanness, justice, truth; or what is our term this evening—responsibility? These, and such like terms, are the symbols of those abstract notions which offer themselves to the human mind, as often

as it turns itself to consider the properties and qualities of the moral world. The human mind, when once awakened from the torpor of savage life, as inevitably gathers to itself and embodies the one class of abstractions, as it does the other. In fact the history of language proves that men concern themselves *sooner* with moral, than with physical abstractions: the words goodness, truth, justice, are older than the words solidity, extension, cohesion. It would be as easy to persuade mankind to keep one eye constantly closed, as to wean them from the habit of employing themselves upon *moral* abstractions, while they are permitted to be occupied with physical abstractions. There is but one means of bringing these intellectual processes to a stop, namely, to brutalize men by foul gratifications and ferocity: the faculty of abstraction then indeed gives way.

And as man thinks of the properties of matter, with a view to some purpose which he desires to effect, by recombining them, so does he think of *moral* properties, with a view to certain recombinations of them *devised by himself*, and which he finds to affect his welfare, especially as a social being. Experience teaches him that some combinations of these qualities promote his happiness, and that others are hostile to it. Experience has taught him moreover, that moral, not less than physical qualities and laws, are open to his interposition, and will yield to his plastic hand. The applicate mathematical sciences are the product, on the one hand; education (personal culture included) legislation, and public instruction, are the product on the other, of these inventive powers of the human mind; and thus it is that civilized man moulds the *material* world (within certain limits) to his will; and moulds the *moral* world (also within certain limits) to his will.

If any choose to say that the assumed distinction between the physical and moral world is nugatory, and is dissipated by a strict and philosophical analysis—I care not at all for

such an objection, in respect of my present argument, inasmuch as the fact of the control exercised by man over *both classes of qualities* (distinction or none) remains untouched. If man can construct machines, he can, in the *same sense*, form his character. We ask for him *no more* liberty than this; but this involves responsibility in the fullest manner.

In every department, as well of physical, as of moral science, the merely theoretic and the practical are intimately blended. Some powers or properties we can in no way touch; others are subjected to our almost unlimited control. But then, so it is, that, in vigorously performing our part in relation to the latter, we nearly or entirely, obviate the difficulties presented by the former. We have little or no control over original temperament, or individual peculiarities of organic structure; nevertheless, knowing in any instance, this temperament, and duly regarding such peculiarities, we adapt the forces of education to the instance, and if we do not infallibly succeed, we rarely fail altogether in effecting our purpose.

Again, it can never be to more than a limited extent that any man, or body of men, whether sages, teachers, or legislators, can bring the material they would work upon—namely, the dispositions of their fellow-creatures, for a sufficient length of time, under their influence. There *is* however a sphere within which a man may work at pleasure, and continue to work as long as he will; and *that sphere is his own bosom.* With respect to what is taking place *there*, the most powerful motives of genuine self-love prompt his endeavours.—With respect to *that* circle, his knowledge of the facts is, or may be, exact.—In *that* home he is little interfered with; and *there*, if any where, he may safely promise himself success. If, in *any* line of labour, and if, in respect of *any* mass of materials submitted to his hand, man be responsible for what he does, or for what he does not do, clearly he is so in regard to *his personal disposition*

and character. But you say, the doctrine of necessity! how get rid of *that?* I will tell you how, when the watchmaker, the millwright, the mason, come forward, and complain that, in their endeavours to bring their several operations to the point of perfection, they are, they know not how, stopped and thwarted by—the doctrine of necessity.

Waiving this, 'What say you,' asks an opponent, 'to the irresistible force of particular tendencies? what say you to ominous protuberances in this or that region of the cranium? what, to a morbid condition of the hepatic apparatus? what, to undue constitutional mixtures in the blood?' What we say to these untoward conditions of human nature is this, That, whereas man shares them with the brute orders around him, he is distinguished from them by the possession of faculties, and by a susceptibility to motives in which *they* have no part, and which give to him, at the worst, a counteractive force, or power of control.

If indeed the possession of such powers, and a sensibility to such motives, still leave man on a level with the brutes—equally helpless—equally irresponsible, then *power* is not *power*, *motive* is not *motive;* and if the case be so, then we may indifferently say that four is equal to two and two; or, to two and six.

In truth, the tendencies, defects, redundancies, of the individual organization, are but varied types of the common organization, and they all stand related, some more, and some less favourably, to those forces of the moral world which it is our business to acquaint ourselves with, and to employ. We are neither denying, nor underrating the difficulties that arise from temperament and organization. But the very word *difficulty* reminds us of powers which are to surmount it. It is quite true that, if these powers are unknown to the individual, or, if being known and present, they are abated by false notions, or are turned aside by

sophisms, then temperament and organization will have their way. What is this but to affirm that, if the expansive force of heat be uncontrolled, or ill-managed, it will prove destructive, not useful?

The powers of the moral system, truly understood, and wisely employed, are always of *immeasurable force;* and they are so, because man, as a responsible and religious being, stands related to infinity and omnipotence.

Let not any misinterpret what is now affirmed, concerning man's control over his character and dispositions. No principle of religion is *really* compromised by the sense in which this affirmation is made. I say this; but will not divert from my argument to give an explanation foreign to it.

In speaking of man's control over his dispositions and character, we must observe some other distinctions.—Children of five and seven years do not invent or construct chronometers and steam-engines; and so far as they may be benefited by any such contrivances, we must say to them—'Machines are made *for* you, not *by* you.' Nevertheless many a child, in his fifth or sixth year, by his intelligent inquiries, and by the devices he resorts to in his sports, gives evidence that he inherits that very abstractive and inventive faculty which made Arkwright and Watt the boast of their country, and the benefactors of mankind.

Neither have the inert natives of Australian islets, as yet, constructed chronometers, or steam engines: and if we found them availing themselves of the one, or clad in the products of the other, we must say to *them*—'Machines are made *for* you, not *by* you.' And yet it is true that the implements formed and used by the savage, speak plainly enough the great principle that *man* is *man*, in all latitudes; and that although his higher faculties may lie dormant, century after century, they are not extinct, but may be awakened at any time, and may be put in movement. Again, even within civilized communities, all men do not

show equal readiness and ability in the construction of machines; and, to the vast majority it must be said, 'Machines are made *for* you, not *by* you.' And yet, if an Arkwright and a Watt be rare, equally rare are instances of human beings, not ranking among idiots, who exhibit absolutely no traces of the abstractive and inventive faculties. In respect to the power of adapting means to a preconceived end, the most stupid individual of mankind immeasurably surpasses the most intelligent of the brute orders, when not obeying a blind instinct.

We now turn to the analogical instances which we have especially in view. When it is said that man's dispositions and character are made *for* him, not *by* him, we must ask, in detail, what is meant. 'Are you speaking of man under his seventh year, or of the cultured adult?—Are you speaking of the houseless tenant of the desert, or of the disciplined, temperate, energetic, and religious man, the representative of advanced civilization?' How manifest is it that precisely the *same things* cannot be predicated of these various samples of humanity!

Men's dispositions, say you, are made *for* them, and not *by* them: if you mean *all men*, on the ground of that doctrine which totally excludes agency, in a proper sense, from the world of mind, as well as from the world of matter, then we do not trouble ourselves with an inane affirmation of that sort. It is enough for our purpose if man be shown to have *as direct* a control over his own dispositions, as it is acknowledged that he has, by the means of education and teaching, over the dispositions of others;—and as much as he exerts over the properties of matter. We do not want for him any more liberty or power in regard to what lies *within* his own bosom, than he is confessed to exercise in relation to what lies *without* it.

But if by men's dispositions, you mean *some* men's, then there is room for the assertion, which indeed may be applied

to all instances, and they are lamentably too many, in which human nature, having fallen into neglect and decay, its self-controlling energies have become dormant. Or, to look among individuals—inasmuch as every man is not an Arkwright, so neither is every man a Socrates: and it would be inconsiderate to affirm precisely the same thing of Alcibiades, as we should of his master. Yet both are, and in *the same sense*, responsible for their dispositions, as well as actions; and if Alcibiades gives indulgence to his passions, and to his vain-glorious temper, we boldly tell him—'You *are to blame*, in not having profited more by the instruction and example of such a teacher.'

In bringing the doctrine of responsibility home, in a practical manner, it is especially important that we should tenderly regard peculiarities of individual temperament. The moralist and the religious teacher are bound to announce the same serious truth, whether Marcus Aurelius or Heliogabalus be before them; if they fail to do this, whether from timidity and false delicacy, or from the misgivings of a sceptical temper, it is plain that they fearfully aggravate the danger of the most critical cases, by holding back the remedy, in part, where its utmost efficacy is needed. Yet the *personal adviser* will use his skill in carrying home this truth to the conscience of each, in the manner most likely to awaken its energies. This skill, scientifically expressed, is the *applicate* of morals. But it is an art which would have neither reason nor utility to recommend it, if it were not true, that *all varieties of natural temperament*, are fit objects of discipline; and that the moral element, or conscience, in all men, affords ground enough for the hope of reformation.

We must not, perhaps, blame the moralist who prefers, as his pupil, Marcus Aurelius: but it would be a work, not merely of greater difficulty, but of greater charity, to take in hand Heliogabalus; and yet it would not be so

except on the principle that, even in *him*, the rudiment of virtue might be quickened, and that even *he* might be incited to the labours of self-reform.

The two parts of this process are distinctly visible:—there is *first*, the external influence—the incitement—the example—the precept, which those, by the way, are of all men the most bound to use assiduously, who are professing that man is 'the creature of circumstances.' Is he so?—then let us take especial care that the circumstances surrounding him, and the conversation he hears, are of a kind to inspire him with the highest notion, and the most serious sense, of *his responsibility*. But the *second* part of this process is as obvious as the first, namely, the internal energy to which education and external influence give incitement and direction. Without the *second*, the first would be only a dumb show—a writing on the sands, a ploughing the bosom of a lake.

It may be well to look a little nearer at the process, while the mind's power over its own machinery is at work. Marcus Aurelius, we will suppose, is perusing the history of Alexander; and, as he reads, he says to himself, 'If I had been Alexander, I would, if it were from mere motives of ambition, have learned to control my impetuous passions. I should then have survived to consolidate the conquest of the world.' But now, why may we not give Marcus Aurelius *another*, and an analogous subject of meditation, namely, the dispositions of Marcus Aurelius, instead of those of Alexander? If any mysterious difficulty, whether metaphysical or moral, attaches to this change of subject, let it be pointed out. Our ordinary consciousness advertises us of none; or, if some persons assure us that they really *do* experience an indescribable stagnation of the faculties as often as they endeavour to ruminate on their particular *faults*, we presume a similar stoppage attends the effort to meditate upon their own *merits*, their virtues, and their talents.

But now, if Marcus Aurelius have discovered flaws in the philosophic emperor's character, and if he sensibly feel the discredit and disadvantage thence accruing, as well to himself as to others, and to the roman world, and if his bosom heave with a generous conception of the fair and good, attainable by man, and yet not actually attained by himself; what is it that hinders his setting about the correction of his fault, and the pursuit of the opposite virtue? Let us be told, what hand, visible or invisible, stays his course, when stretching toward the mark set before him? He clearly perceives what is wanted: the particular motive that is adapted to the occasion, he also recognises. He puts himself then under the guardianship of that particular motive: looks to it, challenges its aid, and will have it always near him; just as the timid catch the hand of the strong and the brave, on the field of danger.

Who must not acknowledge that, whatever difficulties Marcus Aurelius may encounter in the culture and advancement of his personal character, he enjoys peculiar advantages for overcoming them, and such as he could not hope for, if he were attempting the reformation of another? His pupil is always near him, and has no diversity of interests at stake. He possesses the most intimate knowledge of the patient's case, and is aware also, or may be, of every changing symptom. Especially, he is at hand, and ready with corroborative motives, in each crisis of peculiar peril.

No effort of designing intelligence, and of assiduity, which can be named, offers itself to man, accompanied with so many inducements and facilities, as does the work of *moral self-culture:* none is so full of hope; and if, in any instance whatever, a man may be blamed for not having effected the good which was in his power, most of all may he be blamed if, after having received the rudiments of self improvement, precept, and example, he yet has neglected to amend his dispositions, and to elevate his character.

That the human mind feels itself peculiarly at home in this field, is shown by the intense delight with which all contemplate the portraiture of character, whether real or fictitious. No kind of literature is so eagerly devoured as that which depicts men—individually, marked by their peculiarities of disposition and temper. And it is so, because the human mind, while conversing with images of this class, feels that it is among the objects over which it has the most immediate control: the mind delights itself in *the things of the mind,* because *they* are its creatures—the materials upon which it may work without interruption.

Analyze the enthusiasm of the youth who stands, lost in thought, before the monument of Nelson. '*I* may be a Nelson,' he whispers to himself; which means, 'I will make myself such.' Place by the side of the statue of Nelson, the statue of a Crœsus: the boy might indeed desire to be as rich, but the thought of becoming so does not kindle the soul, because wealth is an *accident,* over which the mind has no direct command. Valour and high conduct, even springing as they may from original conformation, are yet felt to be things lying within the mind's jurisdiction, and the soul is on fire with the thought of making them her own.

Do we say that the work of forming and perfecting the character is one of little difficulty, and not liable to disappointments? far from it. What we say is this—that it is a work, with all its difficulties, and all its disappointments, manifestly lying within the range of the abstractive faculty to devise it, and of the active faculties to achieve it. It is therefore a work, like others, upon which the very same faculties are every day employed, in relation to which man may be, and *is,* responsible. When we see that he is doing his part, we sympathize with him in his regrets for having so poorly succeeded. So we listen to ingenious mechanists, one of whom sighs for more costly materials than he can command, and says, 'if I could but afford to point every

axle with a diamond, or to cog my wheels with rubies, I should be able to bring my invention to a faultless perfection:' another blames the humidity of the climate, which, he says, forbids his preserving his speculum from congelations, for one hour, or from rust for a single day: so that he never points his instrument to the skies, without being reminded of the exhalations of earth. Another, if asked why he does not rectify his time-piece by observations, replies, 'it is impracticable to do so in Holborn, where the rumbling of carriages, night and day, imparts to our instruments a tremulous oscillation.' Such are the vexations of the mechanist; but does he therefore throw up his employment? he rather redoubles his assiduity in finding means for commanding success, spite of difficulties.

And so, in the labours of self-culture, one laments the infirmity of his animal temperament; another feels the ill influence of the society he frequents; another mourns the agitations of public life; another the particular disadvantages or temptations to which he is exposed, in the line of his profession. *All* are conscious of these discouragements; but none who adhere to common sense would abandon their hopes of excellence in the inane profession, 'That a man's character is made *for* him, not *by* him.'

A prejudice besetting the human mind, and yet wholly destitute of reason, leads us to suppose that some inscrutable mystery attaches to the intellectual operation, in any case in which, either the subject of our cogitations, or the result, is peculiarly momentous. Thus it is that difficulties have been imagined to belong to moral agency, which, if real (and if *real*, they must be *universal*) would make the every day behaviour of mankind, a burlesque of rational conduct.

We should particularly bear in mind this prejudice when we listen to the many absurd things that have been uttered (and by men of high note) concerning responsibility as to belief and *opinion*.—This topic is, in fact, of no little

importance in relation to our present argument. Men, it is said, are not to be held responsible for their *actions*, inasmuch as their actions are the products of their *dispositions*, and then again, their dispositions are greatly influenced by their belief or opinions; and, as to these, it has been solemnly announced as a 'GREAT TRUTH, finally gone forth to all the ends of the earth, That man shall no more render account to man for his belief, OVER WHICH HE HAS HIMSELF NO CONTROL.'*

If, however, it might be thought lawful to call in question a 'final decision,' pronounced by a high authority, we should be tempted to bring this same 'Great Truth' to the test of common sense;—as thus:—a belief or opinion (over which we are told a man 'has himself no control') is, we presume, nothing else but a proposition, held to be true on some ground of evidence falling short, a little, of direct and irresistible demonstration. Propositions established by demonstrations are said to be *known*, not *believed*; we are also said to *know* those things with which we are personally and familiarly conversant. A man who walks every day from Islington to the Bank may affirm that he *knows* his way thither; whereas a countryman, on his first visit to town, although he may have examined a map of London, and may have asked directions, at setting out, will only profess that he *believes* himself to be taking the right road.

Whatever may be the philosophy of the intellectual operation which is concerned in the acquirement, either of knowledge, or of belief, it can surely be in no way affected by the weight of the consequence attaching to the proposition. For example; whether the countryman were going to the Bank to receive a dividend of fifteen shillings, or of five thousand pounds, is a circumstance altogether indifferent to the mental operations concerned in his finding his way thither.

* An 'Inaugural Discourse.'

But we may approach nearer to the awful confines of this 'Great Truth' by another supposition.—On some urgency of public business, a great man despatches a servant at night-fall, across an open country, to the remote residence of a friend. The messenger loses his path in the pitchy darkness, and at day-break finds that he has been making a toilsome circuit, and is near upon his master's house. Another is forthwith despatched, and is thus enjoined—'*You* will have daylight throughout your journey; and besides, there are houses at each point where it is likely you might go wrong.' Nevertheless, *he* also returns, having missed his way. Yet he comes not without his apology; for he happens to be one of those who have found that 'the highest intellectual cultivation is perfectly compatible with the daily cares and toils of working men:'—he is one of those who, although born in a low station, has had 'his thoughts turned towards *philosophy*:'—he is therefore qualified to make his excuse in philosophic style, and to say, 'My lord, blame me not.—It was, I assure you, my *conscientious belief* that the road I took was the right road:—it has proved otherwise:—this is my misfortune, and yours:—but you know the time has gone by when men may be required to render account to others, for their belief, over which THEY THEMSELVES HAVE NO CONTROL.'

Some would venture to say that my lord's man *might* have entertained a doubt concerning this, his '*conscientious belief*,' and that, on the ground of such a doubt, he *might* have inquired his way. But let the 'Great Truth' be brought to the test of another instance. A man has lived half a century in the 'conscientious belief' that the tales related by Geoffrey of Monmouth, are veritable histories. But at length, frequenting well-informed society, he hears his favourite author spoken of very contemptuously. Nevertheless, his disposition being of the sort which makes him a *steady* friend to whomsoever he has once patronized, he

resolves to adhere to his faith. He *might* indeed (unless some mysterious power sways the world of opinion) he *might* easily examine the evidence, and so convince himself that, in this instance, he had carried credulity a little too far;—he is half inclined to exempt himself from the ridicule he has found himself exposed to; but he hears the GREAT TRUTH announced, that opinion, or belief, is a thing over which 'MAN HAS NO CONTROL,' and he therefore thinks himself happy in the privilege, thus secured to him by the highest authority, of continuing to be a firm believer in the exploits of Prince Arthur!

Unless this 'Great Truth' means that some awful fatality stands in the way of a man's admitting, or entertaining the suspicion that his belief may be erroneous, and denies him the liberty to examine evidence—unless it means this, what does it mean? Unless we are prepared to say that a man who takes the *third* turning in a street when he should have taken the *fourth*, is the helpless victim of the cruel destiny which tyrannises over the world of belief, unless we say this, then this 'Great Truth' can be regarded as little better than a pompous contradiction of every one's common sense.

Nothing can be clearer than that, as well in regard to *opinion* or *creed*, as to disposition and conduct, responsibility takes its *measure* from the means of information:—it does not indeed spring thence; but it rises or falls in proportion. The Chinese artisan lives and dies without ever suspecting that his notions of the figure of the earth are false, or that his religious belief is unfounded. Thousands, it is to be feared, in this land of light, pass their seventy years with little more opportunity than Hindoos or Hottentots enjoy, of 'coming to the knowledge of the truth,' and, with reference to such, it must, with a sigh, be acknowledged that, 'over their belief, *they* have no control.'

But now, shall a man stand up in the heart of a highly civilized and cultured community, and among men who are

reading all books, and mixing in all societies—who hear and discuss everything—and solemnly tell them that, over their belief they have no control? Such an assertion, unless it be intended to express the speaker's belief in a fatality that excludes the notion of agency, *in any sense*, is a flat contradiction of the plainest facts. Let us no more ridicule the absurdities that were gravely discussed in the schools of the dark ages! No 'angelical doctor' of those times ever strove to make good, by syllogisms, a more absurd dogma, or one of worse tendency than this—so ponderously enounced in the hearing of the youth of the nineteenth century, that responsibility does not extend to men's belief, inasmuch as opinion is a matter of fate, over which they have no control, and that 'Henceforward nothing' should 'prevail upon us to *praise* or to *blame* any one for that which he can no more change, than he can the hue of his skin or the height of his stature!'

In the place of this 'great truth,' let us admit the simple fact, which asks no rhetoric to recommend it to our serious regard, That, if there be *any* thing at all, touching a man's intellectual and moral condition, over which he *has* a ready, easy, and *absolute* control, it is—his belief or opinion; and especially so, when high culture has opened to him all means of information, and imparted to his faculties the power to avail himself of them.—To overcome inveterate evil tempers, and to give a new direction to dispositions—too long indulged, is indeed a difficult task. But *at least* a man may inquire into the ground of his *opinions*, and revise them if erroneous; and therefore he is to be held in the highest degree culpable if he fail to do so.

A man, unless he be a hermit, cannot pass through the engagements of a single day, without, in twenty instances, treating others, and allowing himself to be treated as responsible, for actions, dispositions, and opinions. He who should attempt to act the philosopher, on this ground,

toward his children, his domestics, his tradesmen, would be judged fit only for a lunatic asylum. Send your servant to obtain change for half-a-crown; and if he bring back only twenty-nine pence, hold him blameless, on the ground that 'men are not responsible for their actions.' Allow a child to indulge a disagreeable habit, because we are 'not responsible for our dispositions;' or exempt a school-boy from chastisement who tells his master that he 'conscientiously believes' *Ferula* to mean *holyday*, and *Ferialis*, an instrument for slapping on the palm!

Not even philosophers are so absurd *in the petty detail of common life;* and yet, when they come forward to guide the public mind, and when they employ a great reputation for giving currency to their whimsical theories, they do not scruple formally to loosen all the obligations of virtue, or to put their signatures to a solemn acquittance, toward God and man, of every duty. This is indeed a 'preaching of indulgences' which one would not have looked for in these times. And the Tetzels, in this instance, are sages and statesmen who are used to curl the lip, when religious dogmas are mentioned!

But what is likely to be the influence of such preaching when addressed to flippant youth? Men who retain any serious convictions of truth and piety, have constant occasion to lament that frivolity of the young which, even while secular studies are assiduously pursued, deafens the ear when the principles of a higher wisdom are insisted upon. Are young men at college generally actuated by a too eager solicitude concerning points of faith? or are they ordinarily weighed down by a too deep sense of their individual responsibility in regard to the opinions they may hold? We presume the very contrary, and that, therefore, a *truly wise* instructor will be apt to choose some other theme in his addresses, than this of the involuntariness of belief. It is a mode of talking pernicious enough, to tell the young that

a creed is 'of little importance,' so long as the exterior behaviour be irreproachable; but to proclaim to them, in loud tones, that, over their opinions, how false soever, 'they have no more control than over the hue of their skins, or the height of their stature,' is a procedure that can be saved from indignant condemnation only by a recollection of its ineffable absurdity.

The control which men, living amid the advantages of high culture, hold over their opinions, springs, in the most direct manner, from the structure of the human mind, as endowed with faculties of abstraction, comparison, analysis; and as liable to powerful motives, tending to give activity to these faculties, and to extend their operation over the widest range of subjects. All who are, in any degree, intellectually alive, are conscious enough of this power of control, in relation to the changing aspects of scientific or political belief. Is a new and dazzling theory of chemical affinity, or of magnetic influence, put forth, or are the long hidden mysteries of the 'new social system' proclaimed by 'great men?' where shall we find those who will choose to suffer the shame of adhering to 'antiquated prejudices,' in deference to the 'great principle,' that men have no control over their opinions? Singular fact, that this 'great truth' is to be barred out of every department of human research—religion and morals excepted, where it is to be indulged with a terrible despotism, as a compensation for the wrong done it in the regions of physical science, and politics!

That man is responsible, and that he must be treated as such, as well in respect of his dispositions as his actions. appears incontestably, when we examine the structure of the SOCIAL SYSTEM.

But where are we to find our specimens of the social

system? The human family is found subsisting, gregariously, in innumerable modes of combination; from the small gatherings, or clanships, of savage tribes, to the complicated machinery of high civilization. Now surely, whatever may be the sufferings or the abuses which there meet us, we *must* follow man, until we discover him in a state admitting of the full development, and free exercise of *all his faculties.*

And yet our argument would be borne out, if we were to stop far short of the highest condition of the social system; for in fact, no social system whatever can subsist, or be permanent, where man ceases to be dealt with as responsible, and where he himself has forgotten that he is so.

It is moreover manifestly true, that the extent to which, in any community, men are trusted and relied upon, as responsible, is the measure of civilization;—no criterion more exact or infallible. A high doctrine of responsibility, accepted on all hands, and connected with the loftiest motives, is the reason, and the gauge, of social advancement. Enhance this doctrine, and give it a new force, and bring it to bear upon a larger surface of the community, and such a community, whatever be its political framework, is happy, and in progress.—The complicated contrivances of political theorists are superseded, opinion rules rather than law, and the means of terror are forgotten.

On the contrary, spread a *low doctrine* of human responsibility, talk of necessity, as 'a practical principle,' say much of the omnipotence of physical causes; ridicule lofty sentiments, of whatever kind; mock all terrors reflected from futurity; do this, and you lower the social condition as certainly as you would lower the energies of animal life by shedding a new proportion of azote into the atmosphere.

What we here venture to affirm roundly, presents itself as a practical truth, whenever we go into the details of the social economy. We shall gather a few instances, while we

consider—*first*, those NATURAL INEQUALITIES, bodily and mental, which permanently divide the human family into classes. The infant, the constitutionally weak, the sick, the aged, the unskilful, the incautious, the inexperienced, are, in every community, by the appointment of nature, the dependents and clients of the adult, the robust, the wise, the well-skilled, and the experienced; and they must always be liable to become the victims of the selfish, the cruel, the crafty, and the rapacious.

Find a world in which each individual enters upon his course in the condition of ripe manhood, as strong as the strongest, and as wise as the wisest; and to *such* a world, we may remit the consideration of the project to do away with the doctrine of responsibility. Or find a country under whose azure skies men are never afflicted with loathsome maladies; or where, if afflicted, they do not become so peevish as to make an attendance upon them altogether irksome. Find a land in which none are credulous or foolishly sanguine, none infirm of purpose; and under such a sky, and in such a land, we will consider whether the doctrine of responsibility may not be dispensed with, and whether men may not shake off their fears of a future tribunal.

Who can seriously think of such a proposal that has ever listened to the cries of a new-born infant? you allege the maternal instinct, and say it is nature's provision for the welfare of the offspring:—'the mother's milk for its nutriment, and her animal fondness for its defence and comfort.' But you are plainly wrong in thinking this instinct *sufficient*; nor can those believe it to be so who are conversant with infancy. The maternal instinct, strong as it generally is, is of variable intensity; and instances might be mentioned in which it has seemed to be almost entirely wanting, even in those eminent for the higher qualities of the heart. The maternal instinct fades or expires too soon; that is to say, before the time when parental care has done all it may do,

for the welfare of a child. And more than this, the parental instincts are every hour suggesting a course of conduct detrimental to the ultimate welfare of the child, and which suggestions can be controlled *by nothing* but a sense of responsibility. Who does not know that the business of early training is a sort of perpetual warfare, carried on between a sense of duty, and the fond, blind, parental instincts.

Why has nature done so much less for the young of man, than for the young of the brute orders, but because she has given to the human mother a sense of responsibility, equal to the difficult occasions which the long continued helplessness of the human infant presents.

And how feeble and how variable are those instincts upon which any reliance might be placed for the due care of the maimed, the blind, the sick, the aged; of those affected with loathsome and contagious diseases, as well as the dull in intellect, and the wayward! How shall we get these unfortunates duly cared for? shall we give high wages to whoever will undertake such labours? Alas for those who, in sickness, are left to the tender mercies of the hireling! compare the sœurs de la charité, who have been so often named, with the hospital nurse! What the weak and the suffering want, in those who attend them, is not so much an instinctive compassion, as a firm, invariable, and deeply-based sense of duty.

The good Samaritan, might, or might not be by nature, more *compassionate* than the priest and the Levite; yet the result would have been the same, if we only suppose him to have been habitually governed by a homely sense of his duty to his fellows. The priest could perhaps have boasted his fine sensibilities; but withal he has a nervous horror at the sight of ghastly wounds: and the Levite was a philanthropist, only that a severe delicacy in regard to the sanctities of his person forbade his approaching a perhaps dying

man; and why cross the road to examine a case of suffering to which, probably, he could not, 'in conscience,' have allowed himself to administer any aid? meantime the 'good Samaritan,' less nice in taste, and poorer in scruples, alights from his beast; and we may suppose him to have taken as his rule of conduct, the Mosaic precept—'Thou shalt in no wise shut up thy bowels of compassion against thy brother.' This precept he considers, not merely as abstractedly reasonable; but as the expressed will of the Almighty; and he acts on the strength of it.

It is a fact that has often been noticed, that, in a long continued course of benevolent labour, the *instinct of compassion*, which was the philanthropist's prime mover, becomes fainter and fainter every year; or at least recedes, if it does not wear itself out; while *a steady sense of duty*, to which, at the first, he had recurred only on signal occasions, or when called upon to make costly sacrifices, or to encounter dangers, gradually spreads itself out in his view, becoming to him a second nature, and at length constitutes almost the only motive to which he refers.

What did the instinct of compassion do for the wretched, the sick, the oppressed, in the brightest times of ancient civilization? Look into the amphitheatre of the Augustan age; listen to the yells of innocent captives, thrown to the lions, for the amusement of philosophers: or, making your escape from the amphitheatre, walk among the marbled palaces, and look on the right hand, and on the left, among schools, halls, temples, for—HOSPITALS!

Christianity did not confer upon men any new instinct; nor did it altogether teach them a new doctrine; but it brought them to feel *that they were responsible*, and wherever the gospel has had influence, and even when loaded with corruptions, the miserable, and they that were 'ready to perish,' have blessed it as their angel of mercy.

If you point to the masses of wretchedness, yet in the

world, and even near us, we can read these facts in no other sense, than as furnishing an imperative motive for urging upon all men anew, the religious belief of responsibility toward their brethren. And especially these melancholy facts animate our zeal in opposing a doctrine which would administer a mortal opiate to the sense of duty.

Many, even among its foes, have acknowledged that the gospel of Christ has ever been the friend of the poor; but all do not notice that peculiarity which attaches to the christian principle of benevolence. The Sovereign Judge—the patron of the wretched, in making a demand on their behalf, from the rich, advances it, not in *their* name, but *his own*. He will have himself considered, not so much their *advocate*, as their actual representative, and, condescending to a gracious fiction in the terms, he says to the selfish, '*I* was hungry, and sick, and in prison, and ye ministered not unto me.' In other words, the great principle of responsibility toward the RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, is put forward, as the only sufficient motive of a beneficent life. The selfish are not arraigned as having wanted compassion, but as having disregarded duty.

We say then, that the natural *inequalities* always subsisting within the human family, render indispensable the doctrine of responsibility that impels men to perform offices which no instincts would lead them to undertake. Not less is this same principle demanded by circumstances springing from the natural EQUALITY of all men, in regard to their rights, and personal liberty. No human being has a natural right to deprive another of life, liberty, or goods. To prevent any such invasions, civil society is instituted, and a force is somewhere accumulated, which shall always be greater than the force of individuals.

Need it be proved that no such protective force can ever be wielded by the many? it must be confided to a few. NEVER has the civil guardianship of the weak, been *really*

exercised by more than a few. We may think *one*, too few; or *three*, or *thirty*, or *five hundred*; yet it must be a few. And therefore we can do nothing but throw ourselves upon the principle of responsibility. Devise what restraints you will, bind the hands of your public trustee as you can; yet trust him you must. Call him to account every year, every month, every week, every day, every hour; yet, *trust him you must*. Let him know, when he is appointed, that he is to be discharged on the least suspicion of misconduct; yet, *trust him you must*. This very reckoning with him, from day to day, is but the correlative of his responsibility, and means nothing, unless he be considered as accountable. You cannot then lay the first stones of a polity, such as shall be efficient to any good purpose, if you discard the principle of individual responsibility.

Yet this is saying little.—The perfectibility of a political structure, whatever may be its model, is *directly*, as the doctrine of responsibility which it works upon. Let all functionaries, from the king to the constable, be fully alive to the sense of their individual responsibility — not to their fellows merely, but to the Supreme, and then a half of the expensive, and ineffectual mechanism of our political institutions, is superseded.

Give us only, in its fullest force, the principle of *religious responsibility*, and then the simplest, and most efficient of all forms of government, as well as the least expensive, namely —absolute monarchy, becomes practicable; and away with our cumbrous schemes of representative government!

Again; that man *is* responsible, and must always be so treated, becomes evident when we follow, into any of its details, the principle of the division of labour. We may surely be excused the task of proving this principle to be indispensable to even the rudest forms of civilization:—this is assumed. Do away, as some are talking, with the division of labour!—Do away with the professions! Break a

limb—dislocate a shoulder—find yourself to be afflicted with the stone, and then go for assistance to any of your unskilled friends, who will be so kind as to help you? *I* would go to an able practitioner, who, after having given his youth to the study of anatomy, has already set ten thousand broken limbs, returned hundreds of balls to their sockets, and used the inevitable knife, in scores of instances.

But this very principle, clearly indispensable as it is to the welfare and comfort of all, and to the progress of the arts of life, is attended with this inseparable consequence—That it puts the SKILLED FEW, in a position of control over the welfare, and even the lives of the many. This is unavoidable. Even the most learned, the most knowing, the most powerful, must consent to be dealt with as mere children, by each artisan who comes to their aid. There *must* be a trusting of men, in the line of their profession. Their ultimate interests, as professional men, may often suggest to them a course which conscience would forbid. Unless the proficients in any science or art be governed by a sense of duty, call it professional honour, or religious principle, the mass of men are left fearfully at the mercy of the few. To make trial of a new drug, may seem likely to promote the professional success of a practitioner far more certainly than the saving the life of a single obscure patient. But conscience, if he have a conscience, will make him shudder at the thought of playing with the life of one who is wholly in his power.

We have become used, of late, to repeat the glorious axiom, 'KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.' But do we remember the obvious inference, that, as knowledge must ever be possessed by mankind in very unequal degrees, the few will command an advantage, which nothing but conscience can effectually prevent their abusing. Knowledge is power: yes, it is the power of the knowing over the ignorant.

We will imagine now that, in all lands on the *northern*

side of the equator, the doctrine of responsibility, expounded and enforced by religion, pervaded all classes; while, in all lands *south* of the line, such notions were exploded, as the fabrications of the priest. Would any one here present, for the sake of enjoying personal immunity from responsibility, and that he might breathe a freer air, migrate, with his family, and property, from the north to the south?

Let the alternative be stated in any way we please, or let us attribute to a sense of interest all the force that can be rationally assigned to it; we can never, as the members of a social system, wish any thing else than that all with whom we have to do, and upon whose agency nature makes us dependent, *should think themselves responsible.* Nay, we must always, and in each particular instance, wish to see the notions of others, on this point, enhanced, expanded, and refined to the utmost. You yourselves are better taught than to be the slaves of popular superstitions; but you hide your liberty in your sleeves. You listen in scorn to the ministers of religion, when they declaim about a judgment to come! But now, in all candour plainly tell us, are you used to whisper the doctrine of *irresponsibility* to—your wife, to your daughter, to your son, to your servant, to your broker, to your collector of rents, to your bailiff, your steward, your banker, or to your lawyer; or have you subjoined it as a codicil to your last will and testament? or, having done so, do you mean, by and by, to call your physician to your bedside, and mustering your strength, assure him, that you hold him exempt from all responsibility, as to the life of his patients? You mean to speak to him as thus—'Doctor! for aught I know, the present product of external circumstances, combining with your actual dispositions, which have been made *for* you, not *by* you, may now impel you to do an office highly acceptable to my hungry heir at law. Be it so! I exonerate you from all blame; well knowing that, even in such a case, you could not possibly act otherwise!'

One cannot but feel an impatience in formally stating, or in listening to a statement of facts so obvious. What can be clearer than that man, as compared with the orders around him, is so constituted as to make *him*, what *they* can never be—responsible for his actions, and for the condition of his mind. And again, the entire structure of society implies this responsibility; nor could the business of life be carried forward through one day's routine, if this principle were renounced.

How comes it then that, what all men know, and feel, and act upon, every day, has been brought into question? How this has happened is plain enough.—Promulgate what whims we please, there is little danger that men should be so far beguiled out of their common sense as to cease to think themselves responsible in the ordinary affairs of life; but yet they *may* be so far embarrassed in their conceptions concerning the high principles of morality and religion, as to imagine themselves set free from *these* obligations—obligations surrounded by a degree of obscurity.—This then is the extent to which the doctrine of irresponsibility is to be pushed. 'All we want is to release you from your sense of duty toward God:—that effected, and we will leave you alone when we come down to the level of pounds, shillings and pence.—Be assured that we ourselves will hold you responsible in *such* matters.'

This is the *rationale* of the new philosophy respecting human responsibility. Sweep the world clean of all notions of religion;—exempt mankind effectively from the terrors of conscience, and then we should hear no more of men's actions being the products of necessity—of their dispositions being made for them, or that they have no control over their opinions!

I here loudly challenge the candour of any opponent to tell me whether he thinks, if 'creeds' and *religious* opinions had not been covertly in view, a man of high reputation

would have so stultified himself as to tell men, who in fact are every day rescinding some of their opinions, and amending others, in relation to history, physical science, and politics, that they have 'no more control over their opinions than over the colour of their skins!' This doctrine applied to any one department of human inquiry (religion excepted) must be scouted as sheer nonsense. Utter it in the hearing of men of business, who, to-day, on the ground of a certain *opinion*, embark thousands in a speculation which, on the ground of a better-considered opinion, they will to-morrow endeavour to withdraw thence. Whenever a man feels that his immediate welfare depends upon the correctness of his opinions, he does not go to the sophist to ask whether opinion be as unchangeable as the colour of his skin; but forthwith runs about, in all directions, to inform himself on the matter.

The real, though unconfessed motive which has impelled men of intelligence to put forth sophisms so prodigiously absurd, is plain enough; and it is a delicacy I do not pretend to, which would lead one to affect not to understand what is so simple. Let the promoters of such doctrines have the honesty to tell us that they mean nothing more than to dispel the notion of *religious* responsibility, and to put contempt upon *religious* opinions; and that they are fully resolved to talk like madmen or fools no longer than until the restraints of piety and morality shall have been levelled with the ground!

Every one who knows anything of the art of reasoning well knows that the *intellectual process* by means of which we arrive at truth, in any instance, is not affected, either by the quality of the *subject* of an argument, or by the incidental motives which attach to it. There is no pretext then for alleging a distinction between scientific, mercantile, and religious opinions. Certain questions, touching these matters, may be more difficult than others, or less suscep-

tible of an immediate and final determination:—concerning some, a wise man will hold his opinion in suspense; concerning others, fix it unchangeably. But these differences do not logically belong to any one class of opinions, while other classes are exempt; they belong to all classes; and therefore, a sweeping doctrine concerning *opinion*, as a thing for which a man is no more accountable than he is for having a brown or a yellow skin, although, in the mind of the speaker, it may be intended to bear only upon *religious* opinion, must, if logic be logic, be deemed to hold good of all opinions. For a plain avowal of so clear an inference nothing is wanted but the requisite honesty.

That man is responsible, in the religious sense of the term, and shall hereafter give account, as well of his actions, as of his dispositions, to Him who is ready to judge the world, we confidently infer, from what we know, or are compelled to believe, concerning *the structure of the universe*.

'The structure of the universe,' exclaims an opponent—'what know you of the structure of the universe?' More than a little; not indeed by travelling over it, or by bare inspection of its phenomena, as seen from this planet; but by the aid of just methods of reasoning, founded on those phenomena. Enough is known of the universe to make it certain that it *is* A UNIVERSE;—*one* system, the product of One Mind, sustained by One Power, and governed by one law. The incessant miracle of the transmission of light, from innumerable points, unconfused, through spaces not to be conceived of, is evidence irresistible of oneness of design, as well as of unobstructed dominion. The prevalence of *one* law of gravitation, and motion, seen in the spinning of the schoolboy's top, and in the gyration of stars infinitely remote, assures us that the universe is as much a *single*

mechanism, as this planet, or an animal, or a plant, or a leaf, is one piece of workmanship. Observe binary stars, revolving about their common centre of gravity, not in a perfect circle, but in an ellipse, and you hear a voice coming from that remote region, and bearing a testimony, not merely to the first truth of philosophy, but to the first truth of theology.

And it is worth observing (while speaking of our knowledge of the universe) that we, of this age, know immensely more than our predecessors knew: we know what philosophers of old desired to be informed of, but died without ascertaining. We know that which our Bacon, only two hundred years ago, thought questionable, and which our Newton hardly dared to profess. Now the long-continued ignorance of things which, at length, have come to be familiarly understood, affords a corroboration of our faith in great truths, although very partially admitted, and widely rejected, and also of our hope in the ultimate prevalence of such truths.

Any portions of a regular curve being given, we may find the centres, and complete the periphery. Take the instance of the French astronomers, mapping the path-way of Halley's comet, and predicting the time of its return to our system; and this with no other data than a small, and much perturbed portion of that orbit, as observed from this planet. In such instances immensely more is proved to be practicable, than the uninformed would easily credit, or can even understand. The reasoning faculty, in man, has, in such instances, made good its pretensions to stretch its inferences far and wide, when governed by a docile and patient love of truth.

But if the visible world be the product of one power and intelligence, the intellectual universe may safely be assumed to be so, until the contrary is proved—pervaded by one law, and tending to one issue. For the purpose of ascertaining

that law, we must do in moral science, what we do in mathematical, take our own system, as the ground of our calculations. What focus then is the moral system, in this world, apparently pointing to? What interpretation are we warranted in putting upon the consent of mankind, in all ages, regarding invisible power, a future life, and a future retribution? Or, why should not the workings of a single human mind, soundly constituted, and exhibiting a harmony of the faculties, why should not the workings of such a mind be taken as a true indication of the great system in which that mind is placed? Now *wherever* we find suffering virtue, that is—a strong, sensitive spirit, calumniated and oppressed, by lawless power, and *whenever* the outraged sentiment of right, instead of generating malign motives of revenge, takes a more generous form; in *all* such instances, the eye is seen to be directed upward, to the throne of righteous invisible power. Is there then no meaning in this convergence of generous minds, unjustly suffering? Again, wherever we find guilt aroused from its lethargy, and having an eye to look into the invisible world, it is seen directing its glance along that same radius, toward the awful centre of justice. Or, wherever we find the high abstractive faculty, conjoined with profound and pure emotions, there also, the eye of expectation is seen to be bent toward the centre of the moral world, where sits the Sovereign Goodness, and the Universal Truth. In other words, human minds, not debauched, not sophisticated, under every variety of circumstance, if only the deeper emotions are stirred, declare their relationship to a great invisible system, and utter some notes of a harmony, which is indeed the harmony of the spheres.

But let us take up another position on our little world, that we may thence calculate the orbit of the great world. We have seen, and the fact is obvious enough, that men can never deal one with another otherwise than on the

principle of responsibility, and that without a high and religious notion of responsibility, the social system can make no advances. But now is it true that men are to be required to work every day on the strength of a doctrine which is *a fiction*, and which, as they become enlightened, they must know to be such? This can never be. Sound minds scorn as a subterfuge whatever does not satisfy reason. We *must* have responsibility; but it can be of no solid use to us unless felt to be founded in truth. In other words, that very doctrine of responsibility which is needed as the only safe ground of the commonest commercial transactions, can be of no avail, unless men may be rationally convinced that it is a principle which connects them, and all creatures, with God, and each other, throughout the universe. This practical doctrine of responsibility, without which the movements of common life come to an end, can rest on no fulcrum short of the centre of the universe—the throne of God. Rest it at any intermediate point, and though it may bear *some* stress, it will not bear every stress; and it fails where most it will be needed.

Justice, in its abstract idea, is a universal: its very nature is destroyed by limitation. (Mercy does not displace justice, but honours it by a special provision). Partial justice, is injustice: frustrated justice is not justice: temporary justice, is not justice: justice taking effect by fits and starts, is not justice. Justice is like a band or tier, passing around the base of a dome, which, unless it meet and be clenched, grasping all things, has no binding force in any of its parts.

On the severest principles of reasoning, as I think, it may be affirmed, that, if our having come to think and speak of right and wrong, and retribution, be not an ineffable solecism, it is a conclusive proof that the great principles of retribution *are* the laws, universal, of the moral world. They are real in any world, only because they are neces-

sarily real in all worlds. They can be valid any moment, only because they are binding eternally.

Let us here guard against a frequent misapprehension. Men quarrel with the notion of a future judgment, because, in the place of *retribution*, they put something very different, and then declare they can never admit it to enter into the administration of a righteous being. Such illusions might be dispelled, simply by saying, that the word *retribution* means — RETRIBUTION — the rendering to every one his *due;* and when applied to a future judgment it must be held to stand as the symbol of an *unknown quantity*, concerning which we may safely reason, although it be unknown. To say, in any case, that retribution is *inequitable*, or undue, or severe, is merely to contradict the meaning of the word. What is severe, and unjust, comes under another category, and is to be dealt with on other ground: to affirm that a future *retribution* is *unjust*, is to profess that two and three are equal to more than five.

Most manifest is it that, before we can be qualified to enter at all upon the question of the lenity or severity of a future judgment, we must be informed on two points—namely—the actual culpability of the parties, so dealt with; and the amount of the penalty imposed upon them.

We are often tempted, under the influence of the same misapprehension, to inquire what shall be the retributive lot of the uninstructed and degenerate millions of mankind. A far more pertinent theme of meditation surely would be—the probable retribution of those who, having enjoyed every moral advantage, by culture of the faculties, and by contact with truth, have yet abused all!

We should not fail here to notice one circumstance, attaching to the present system of things, which seems to be full of meaning, as indicative of the principles of universal government. It has been often adverted to by moralists, and is this, that the direct consequences of a fault, are

frequently such as seem out of proportion to the actual blameworthiness, in the particular instance: thus a mere imprudence of early life is sometimes followed by irremediable sufferings; while the worst crimes are as often perpetrated with impunity. A system of *natural* retribution is evidently established, and yet is broken in upon by frequent anomalies.

Such facts are interpretable in several senses.—They *may* mean, that the demands of absolute justice are such, that a comparatively venial offence is never *over punished*, by any course of suffering to which, in the present life, we are liable. So understood, the impunity of atrocious offenders speaks aloud of a judgment to come. Or again; such facts *may* be thought to present themselves as a kindly-intended warning, or as if it were whispered to us—'Learn the danger of sin; and see what may be the consequence of faults you deem trivial.' Or they may be intended to arouse the feeling which leads us to desire an equalization of all inflictions. Or perhaps, we may the most safely consider them as attesting the serious truth, that man, in being made liable to the operation *of general laws*, beneficial when respected, is left to sustain the entire ill consequence, be it what it may, which attaches to a disregard of them.

Now in fact this is the very inference, alarming as it may be in its application to the present and future condition of the human family, which presents itself on all sides, whether we look to the material, or to the moral world. General laws are every where taking their course, let the consequence be never so disastrous to individuals, or to millions of individuals. An inundation rushes with as wild a rage over a populous province, as over a desert: the volcano buries in fire, either a capital and its thousands, or a forest. Nay, the crust of the earth itself may one day break up, and let forth the central heat, from as simple a cause as that which produces the bursting of a chestnut before the fire. Every day the fair prosperity of families is

blighted by the operation of some general law of the human system;—a law good and necessary in its tendency, but destructive in this or that instance. All we assume then is, that there is one inflexible rule of RIGHT, taking effect in all worlds;—happily for those who are in harmony with it; destructively for any who stand opposed to it. What is ordinarily called *future retribution*, might, on this supposition, be designated as the *natural issue* of the one law of the universe, in respect of those who are at variance with it.

I will now for a moment go over to the position of an opponent, and state his argument for him: he says, 'Look to the actual condition of the human family, at this moment. Is it possible to bring a religious notion of responsibility to bear upon that moral condition in which we find the vast majority of mankind? Put out of view the exceptive cases of nations, or individuals, who, by culture, have come into a state to which such a doctrine might possibly seem congruous. These cases overlooked, the *mass* of men are seen to have entered upon their course and to have run to the end of it, under circumstances which ought to be held to have *necessitated* their evil dispositions and bad conduct. *Can* we then believe man to be responsible, when we find him in a condition which candour compels us to call irresponsible, involuntary, hopeless?'

So speaks my opponent; and not without an appearance of reason; but the real difficulty is not encountered in *his* view of the case; for a fact not less manifest than that of the inert, irresponsible condition of the mass of mankind, is the one already more than once adverted to, that, whenever human nature is developed, and its germs quickened, the principles of a moral system are recognised, as indispensable in practice, and as abstractedly true. Nor have even the most degraded families of mankind altogether lost their hold of these same principles. Superstitions, sanguinary rites, and horrid retaliations, have proved that what was

wanting was not the rudiment of the moral life, but the *culture* of it.

The degraded condition therefore of the million, is not our datum, looked at *apart* from *the condition of the few*. In considering *both* classes of facts, we must assume, either that the *few* have snatched an excellence not intended for them by nature; or that the *many* have fallen from their original place. Which is the easier supposition? Shall we say that savage man, sensual, fierce, and irresponsible, is nature's legitimate son; while civilized man, controlling his inferior instincts, and adhering to truth and virtue, is her spurious offspring? We must either believe this, or assent to what is here assumed to be the real fact, melancholy as it is, that, whereas human nature includes every element of the moral life (if it did not, they could never have appeared at all) yet that some dire and ancient calamity has brought all into a position which is actually ruinous to most.

We suppose then that this world of ours, one among millions of worlds, was not subjected, as some have strangely seemed to think, to the perilous conditions of a moral economy *arbitrarily*, or as if an experiment were to be tried in an obscure corner of the universe, and on a small scale. No; but man was made responsible (come what might) and was constituted a religious being, simply because there IS NO OTHER LAW OF RATIONAL EXISTENCE, ACTUAL, OR POSSIBLE, in all the fields of creation! Responsibility, with its risks, is man's lot, because there *is no other lot* for thinking orders. The moral system, with its portentous issues, is, we assume, as old as the heavens, and will outlast them: it is as wide as the skies, as high as the throne of God, and as deep as hell.

There is one law, as we see, for the material world:—gravitation, which rules the harmony of the planetary systems, has probably thrown some planets on a tempest of fire, in the bosom of their central suns; and the projectile force

may have sent other planets on an endless journey, through the voids of space.—Suppose that, from whatever unusual perturbation, or collision, a planet, in full career, has slipped its centripetal tie: off it flies, and who shall stay it? away it speeds—parts company from its neighbours—traverses unmeasured spaces—shoots right through the starry fields—takes its last look at the regions of light and life, and goes on—journeying, an exile, never to reach a home!

The counterpart of such a supposition is easily supplied: the human family, subjected, like all other families, to the law and issues of responsibility, has, from whatever cause, loosened its firm hold of that law:—it has gone off, and is in peril of, we know not what final catastrophe. What has happened, is just what *must* have happened, on our supposition, unless omnipotence should interpose. The course of things in this world is no mystery as to the process, for we see it exemplified every day on a small scale. An insulated family, trained to virtue, and living somewhile in purity and peace, at length declines from that happy condition: forgetting their hereditary faith, the members of it cease to think themselves bound by motives of virtue; they learn to consult only selfish and animal instincts, and a little time suffices for so far debauching them as that, to the eye of a spectator, they should appear really to have laid down their moral nature, and to act under a terrible necessity of doing evil. And if the original members of this family might sink so low, what would be the condition of their children, of the third, and fourth generation? Born in the blindness of fierce and sensual propensities, they would be, what the untaught millions of mankind actually are.

But such a state of things, how melancholy soever, affects not at all our notion of human nature, as still belonging to a universal moral economy. Even if there were *no* truth in the world, our inference would be valid, although less satis-

factory. But there *is* truth in the world—elevated notions of virtue are extant, and are acted upon; and this truth comprising the great principles of religion, wherever it is wisely and assiduously brought to bear, takes effect, and repeats itself. At this very moment, when the civilized races are every where invading the wastes of barbarism, long lost truth is also being carried out, and under promise to regain its ancient territory. That the recovery of even the most degraded races to a sense of religion, is possible, has been demonstrated, again and again, in our times, and under every variety of circumstance. Nothing then forbids the hope that savage, and semi-savage man, may at length be led home to God. Conscience, and the highest moral sentiments, have already been wakened in the bosom of the Negro, the Hottentot, the South Sea islander, the Hindoo; these *have* learned that they are responsible: they *have* acquired the fear and hope of futurity. The problem then is solved; the redemption which has actually been effected in thousands of instances, may be effected in millions. Entire communities of lately savage men have been reclaimed; and, if we speak of virtuous sentiment, and purity of conduct, these converts take a position on a level with the best ordered societies of the civilized world.

Let but this process go on, and the long dismembered human family, not more various in temperament, colour, and speech, than in belief, will become—*a family* indeed, worshipping at one altar, and restored to the great system of which, even now, it declares itself to be a member by its ominous anticipations, and its contrarieties. We appeal to undisputed facts in saying—That, if the elements of the moral economy, as expounded and sanctioned by the religion of Christ, have but free course, the time will come when the philanthropist must cease to be ashamed in calling the black, the tawny, and the copper coloured races, his brethren.

But an anxiety of a very different sort attaches, at this moment, to the condition, and probable destiny of the untaught millions who crowd the homes of civilization. Dense masses of what is little better than savage life, marked by its characteristic wretchedness, improvidence, ignorance, sensuality, and ferocity, are stowed, to suffocation, within all the great cities of Europe—and especially the commercial and manufacturing towns of Great Britain.

Civilization has several times been overthrown by a hurricane of barbarism, coming down upon it from a distance; but it is now everywhere put in peril by the same rude elements, bursting up from caverns under our feet. Heretofore savage life has come in upon civilized life, armed only with brute strength; but if now it commands less hardihood and nerve, the deficiency is more than made up by the frenzy of false doctrine. The domestic millions who, at this time, menace liberty, property, life, together with the arts, commerce, philosophy, religion, and who must plunge themselves into deeper misery in effecting the desolation of society—these, barely hearing the voice of truth, or only catching it as a remote and confused sound of many discordant tongues, are giving the ear, in gloomy thoughtfulness, to the wildest absurdities—absurdities so gross as to be almost secure from refutation by setting common sense at defiance.

Meantime, inasmuch as it is an hour of infatuation—an hour of want of counsel—want of union—want of principle, those who should see the peculiar peril of the moment, and know how to meet it, are allowing it to be inferred, by the mass of the people, that, in *theory* they themselves are one with them.—Some, cutting the roots of all serious regard to truth, as what every man is bound to look to, by declaring that belief, *religious* belief, is a matter of chance or destiny, an accident of the mind, as colour is of the body. Others (alas that newspapers are listened to by millions, sermons only by hundreds) others, high in station, are professing

before the world that they have themselves no fixed notions of responsibility—metaphysical enigma as it is!—Not understand responsibility? not know so plain a thing as this, that if a man receives the cloak of another in charge, he may reasonably be required to restore it? not understand that, if a man accept the hospitalities of a friend, it is a detestable baseness to abuse his confidence, and desolate his home? not understand that, if a man be intrusted with the welfare of an empire, he may look to a time when he shall be called to give an account of his stewardship? not understand *Responsibility?* not know that God will hereafter judge men in righteousness, rendering to all according to their works?

Grant it, there *are* mysteries in religion; but, at least, *these* things are no mysteries. Grant it, there are depths in abstract philosophy; but these things come not within the province of abstract philosophy. If indeed *these* things be obscure, reason totters, and we must no longer trust either its plainest deductions, or the evidence of the senses.

Thus it happened fifty years ago, when the social body was about to break up, and its elements to putrefy, in France. Philosophers had made themselves the apostles, and statesmen the smiling patrons, of the doctrine which, at length, spoke its meaning in the guillotine. Truth had been mocked at as a phantom; all obligations had been scouted; the moral system had been proclaimed null, and men were told that they were the creatures of 'physical necessity,' and that responsibility is a fable; or at best an unsearchable mystery—a something which 'cannot be understood;' these things having first been said by men of high culture—half in jest, were caught at by ferocious seducers, and repeated and expounded, with grim explicitness, in the lanes and alleys of every town:—and then the work was ready:—the clusters of the earth were fully ripe, and the wine-press was trodden until there flowed from it a broad river of human blood.

These things are yet fresh in our recollection: they were not witnessed by our fathers, but by ourselves; yet we seem to have forgotten so soon the lesson they teach. The miasma that is rising in visible fumes from the unwholesome levels around us, has crept into palace windows, and works as a stupor upon men's minds, so that the most palpable dangers are idly gazed at, or are even jested with.

The invention of gunpowder, it has been said, effectually secures the civilized world against any second overthrow by barbaric hordes:—vain confidence! vain at least, if the time should come when the barbaric host shall start up, in a day, knife in hand, from our domestic soil. Goths, and Huns, and Vandals, if they were terrible by their superstitions, were also held in check by them:—the moral element was some way conserved in their bosoms: and they soon yielded themselves, conquered by the milder creed of their victims.

But more terrible evils are to be looked for when, the conscience having been cut clean out of the bosom by the traitorous hand of the sophist, millions, maddened by cruel privations, are told, even by their superiors, that force is the only reason. Brutalized, even more in creed than in habits, they will not be found to have lost any of those terrible energies which belong to man, as a moral agent; and, if lost to virtue, they are not lost to the powers which virtue should have commanded: if severed from the restraints of religion, it is only that they may surrender themselves the more fully to the frenzy of fanaticism; and if the fanaticism of *religion* have devastated kingdoms, the fanaticism of *irreligion* will pass as a deluge of blood over the field of the civilized world:—which may God in his mercy avert!

THE END.

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